

FIGHTING OVER PEACE

REPRESENTATIONS OF CND IN THE
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INTRODUCTION

Origins and Authorship

This report was a response to a request from national CND for a study of 'the media coverage of CND at the present time'. In the original request, Alison Whyte, press/publications officer of CND, drew our attention to the national demonstration of 24 October 1981 as a focus of press interest.¹ As the rally was, indeed, a salient event in the recent history of CND, we decided to concentrate primarily on the media coverage surrounding the actual event itself. We aimed at an extensive review of different media over a relatively short period of time, notably the days preceding and following the demonstration. The request reached us at the beginning of the academic session 1981-82 when the Media Sub-Group of the Centre was meeting to decide on an initial focus for the year's work. The whole group² was involved in the collection of the material and the initial analysis. The writing group, however, consisted of six members³, four of whom were new to the group at the beginning of the year. We consciously used the project, after discussion with CND, as a way into the practices of media analysis.

The final draft of the report was completed in April 1982 and sent to national CND. The present version is unrevised, except to correct some errors. But we have added an Afterword, the main purpose of which is to consider some aspects of the subsequent history of media coverage of CND. The Falkland Crisis, the national demonstration of 6 June 82, the continued, often explosive growth of CND local groups and activities, the battles over the Peace Camps, and the increasing coverage in the media (especially outside the 'mainstream' of T.V. and press news and current affairs) made some comment on subsequent events essential. Our coverage for the Afterword was necessarily more haphazard and patchy than that for the main study; but we were seeking, mainly, to review similar themes over a much longer period, so see whether (and how) they had changed.

In the rest of this introduction we concentrate on sketching some features of the materials and methods of the main study. But it is worth adding one further preliminary point. This study was never intended primarily as a contribution to the academic debate about the media. For this purpose, for example, we are inadequately explicit about the sources of our own theories. Nor do we discuss, with any elaboration, the state of the field of media studies in general. We do have views on this, but they remain, largely implicit. We worked, instead, under different 'disciplines': the attempt to be useful (and comprehensible) to a politically-involved but not necessarily academic readership, the

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need to say something of value to a campaigning organisation, and, also, the needs of collective research and writing as an education for the participants themselves. Latterly, we have considered preparing a more academic version in, for example, an expanded book form. But we have rejected this, for the moment, in the interests of making the substantive analysis more available, and available sooner.

Materials

Our survey covered the following materials:

1. All national daily newspapers, Friday 23 October to Tuesday 27 October.
2. All Sunday national newspapers, Sunday 25 October.
3. All BBC and ITN newscasts (TV) on Saturday 24 October, together with selected items of news and current affairs programmes from Friday, Sunday and Monday (eg. the Bronowski lecture: the World in Action programme on E.P. Thompson).
4. The following radio coverage: all newscasts on Radios 1, 2 & 4 on Saturday 24 October and a selection of newscasts and programmes on Radios 1 and 2 on Sunday and Monday: BBC World Service, news and current affairs programmes on the Saturday and Sunday; a selection of local radio programmes from London: LBC and BBC Radio on the Saturday and Sunday; a selection of local West Midlands radio programmes from BRMB, Radio Birmingham, Beacon Radio.
5. The provincial press in Birmingham and Leicester⁴ on the Saturday and Monday.
6. The Music Press (Melody Maker, New Musical Express, Sounds, Record Mirror) in the week before and after the demonstration.
7. The London 'Alternative' Magazines (Time Out, City Limits and Event).
8. The Left and Feminist Press (Socialist Worker, Socialist Challenge, Labour Herald, Tribune, Big Flame, Leveller, Spare Rib and Women's Voice).

We sought, in short, to cover the mainstream media quite extensively, but added several items (eg. 6, 7 & 8) because we were especially interested in what has often been identified as CND's 'new' areas of support, especially the young. We paid rather more attention to radio than is common in much contemporary media research, which tends to stress, perhaps exaggerate, the peculiar force of television. This was related in part to our sense of the importance of the conditions of 'readership' of the media (the ubiquity and accessibility of radio especially in the daytime and at the weekend and especially in the course of domestic labour) and, again, our interest in a younger audience (Radio 1 and the commercial radio stations).

We might add that the tendency to concentrate on mainstream media (BBC TV, ITV and the daily national press) and especially on the popular press, may lead to an overestimation of the conservatism of the media as a whole. This, in turn, may have considerable implications for CND. Any movement which attempts to create a mass basis or is popular, democratic and campaigning in form must depend heavily on the media of public communication. This is especially the case of a movement that also depends on the ways in which events on a world canvass are portrayed, events often far removed from the ordinary experience of participants. Revelations about geo-military politics and strategies and the public thinking (and indiscretions) of high-ranking politicians and military men, amplified and framed by the public media, must play a major part in the political dynamics of such a movement. CND and similar movements, therefore, have a particularly important stake in the processes of public communication.

CND's current concern with the media is therefore easy to appreciate. It is important, however, to specify the problem further: which media in relation to which audiences? The marked development of sub-cultural and counter-cultural forms in our society, the existence of media aimed at particular audiences (eg. magazines aimed at youth or women⁵ or those interested in counter-cultural movements) have added fresh dimensions to study of 'the media' and an assessment of their social influence.

Approaches: Media Bias?

We were given little guidance about the precise questions in which CND was interested. This is perhaps one index of the relatively tentative and novel nature of these questions for the organisation itself. One reasonable expectation of the organisation, however, was that we (and other researchers approached) would make some kind of assessment of whether the media, at the present time, present an unfavourable or favourable view of a rapidly expanding movement. In particular (since this is a common framework for politically radical media analysis) CND might wish to be able to assess the 'biases' and 'distortions' in media coverage of CND activities and key events in its field of activity. We see one part of our brief to make an assessment of the 'favourable'/'unfavourable' aspects of media coverage. But this is by no means the most important part of our report. In particular we have not used the model of biases and distortions, except insofar as we attempt to identify, in the early parts of this report, some of the grosser absences, suppressions and forms of selective reporting characteristic, in particular, of the conservative popular press. Why, then, have we tended to avoid the straightforward

identification of media bias?

1. The first reason concerns some broad questions about ways we come to have knowledge about the real world. Models of bias or distortion rest upon the assumption that it is possible to discover and to present some relatively unproblematic truths about a social phenomenon. The media treatment can then be judged against this ideal portrayal. The difficulty here is that there is no view of any event which does not depend upon a framework of meanings and values. It is simply not possible to construct an objective picture against which to gauge distortions. This can be readily appreciated, we think, if we consider what an objective or fully adequate account of the CND rally would look like. It would have to embrace the complex social movement that is CND, as well as a particular set of events carrying their own meanings for participants (the Rally of 24 October), and the multiplicity of representations of these in the media. It would need to encompass not merely some factual and explanatory narrative of events (itself a form of construction of reality, the taken-for-grantedness of which is increasingly questioned), but also some reconstruction of the meanings of the event for different groups of participants and observers. These are in no sense simply given by the event itself, but are actively constructed and, in fact, fought over. It is not possible to stand outside this competition of 'theories', this struggle over social definitions. Any account is in fact an intervention in such a conflict.

It is important to add that we don't doubt that there are (complex) truths to be discovered about any historical event or process. More correctly, perhaps, we can and should argue that some accounts are more adequate to the real processes than others. In other words, we do not accept that all viewpoints are equally valid and are merely a matter of opinion. Good reasons can be given for preferring one account to others, but the construction of more adequate accounts is no easy matter and we cannot assume there are simple empirical touchstones. Actual participation in the events themselves does not necessarily provide, for example, a privileged viewpoint - as some of us who attended the rally (and arrived too late for the speeches!) can testify. The unproblematic appeal to experience may assume the force of practical dogmas, and is thus an unreliable measure of distortion. Such dogmas may become a problem when we need to assess the real force of views other than our own, including their 'popularity'.

2. Media Accounts and Audiences

The second set of difficulties concerns the justifiable 'reach' of certain kinds of research - what ^{should} and should not be read into them. It may be possible to demonstrate certain kinds of 'bias' in media texts, in the programmes or reports themselves. In fact there is now a whole range of quite sophisticated methods⁶ (not all compatible with each other) through which to examine the particular ways in which the media 'construct' our social world. We have drawn on some of these in our own 'readings' of the coverage. But it is now increasingly recognised by media analysts that such readings can only yield a view of tendencies (eg. Morley, 1980). The most advanced and appropriate forms of media analysis attempt to establish the 'dominant' or 'preferred' reading of a particular text, the set of meanings (or some of them) which it carries in its very structure, the way it positions us as 'readers', the logic or tendency of its account (eg. Hall et al., 1980). But they also recognise that such texts are always readable in other ways. In other words, a report of any sort is open to various interpretations by its different readers. It cannot force or impose one meaning upon them. The very process of reading and understanding involves taking in representations of the world, and in this process we both change the meaning of what we read in relation to what we already know and believe, and also change our beliefs and knowledge in response to what we read. The different frameworks which organise beliefs and knowledge can be called 'discourses'.

The implication of this argument is that we should not infer the social effects of media texts from an analysis of their forms and contents. Rather, we need to treat texts as materials for further cultural work, involving tendencies and pressures to be sure, but their meanings not fully realised until 'read'. In particular we should not assume that the meanings of the analyst (from his or her own social location and culture) necessarily correspond to those of other readers. In a society whose cultural forms are deeply structured by large social differences and relations of power (those especially of class, gender and race), models of 'bias' threaten merely to confirm the views of those middle-class and largely male persons who constitute a large part of the community of academic researchers. Radical media researchers, critical of conservative bias, do not always escape from this trap. More positively, these considerations point to the need for researching actual 'audiences', using methods that are attentive to the complexity of patterns of 'lived' beliefs, but also the tendencies of forms of public communication.

3. Media Production and Professionalism

There is a third difficulty of forms of analysis which stay mainly at the level of 'texts'. They do not tell us much about the conditions under which media texts are produced. The social organisation of media production, the practices of production, the professional ideologies (eg. what counts as news) and conscious intentions of journalists, editors and media managers (eg. Kumar in Curran et al., 1977), the relations through which the tendential meanings of texts are produced are only partially visible even when production is an emphasis in such a study. Yet the absence of this perspective and of appropriate empirical studies constitutes a weakness in any critical enterprise. At the very least it provides grounds for the rejection of criticism by the media professionals themselves, who may accuse analysts (most commonly another set of professionals located in academic institutions) of ignorance of the practical constraints of their practice. Often such responses are connected to questions of 'audience', as when journalists complain, with a somewhat unreflective common sense of their own, that they are only giving the public what the public wishes to see! Any adequate response to this line of argument requires that we understand something of the real conditions under which journalists operate and the real constraints on their freedom.

It is not possible, in a project of this modest scope, to cover all the aspects indicated above, from production to text to socially-located readings. Of course, we may draw on previous studies of production and the audience, but since both are specific to particular historical moments and particular issues there are limits to transferring such insights. This is one further reason why this report (and others like it) must be read as only partial and tentative, not as definitive accounts of bias.

4. Bias and Pessimism

There is a fourth set of reasons why the bias/distortion model may not be the most serviceable. There are definite limits to its usefulness in relation to the policies of a movement like CND. A demonstration that in fact media coverage of CND is persistently 'unfair' may easily become a pretext for not having a policy towards the media at all. After all, whatever we do or say, so the argument might go, the press will select, distort and present our work in what seems to them an unfavourable light. Certain theoretical beliefs in the consequences of the capitalist organisation of the press, for instance, may encourage inferences that all press coverage is accordingly biased against all movements which express social opposition to the dominant political structure and disposition of power. So we have

to learn to do our own things in our own ways, build up our own means of communication, educate, agitate and organise in a more organic way 'among the people'. Such a viewpoint may be powerfully reinforced by bitter experiences from the past. We don't at all deny the importance of self-organisation of this kind, but there is a danger of undue pessimism about the public media. CND itself and the October events are, indeed, an interesting case in this respect. It is undoubtedly the case that CND challenges very powerful institutional and economic interests of our society and the international order (notably the state bureaucracies, the military and those with a direct material stake in the manufacture of the means of destruction). It is also involved in a very powerful, though often implicit, critique of the forms of political life that are regarded as normal in our society and of those forms of conservatism that depend upon a heightening of the ideological oppositions between 'East' and 'West', or 'Communism' and 'the Free World'. As we shall argue in more detail later, these struggles (and many more) are carried in the apparently single-issue demand for 'Peace'. Yet it is not the case, as we shall also argue later, that the media of public communication have been hostile in any univocal way to the recent resurgence of the movement. In many ways the media, or the wider effects of their coverage, have acted, intentionally or not, in ways that have been helpful to the cause (or causes, or some of them). This should not be so surprising if we employ a framework of analysis that recognises the real though limited autonomies of the media, the importance of conflicts between dominant interests and the way in which the media respond to new social movements, even though they may end up attempting to contain them. This is not to tip over into a view that sees the media as the guarantors of liberal freedoms, even-handedly open to all views. There are real constraints and controls, a real weighting of interests, a real tendency to closure and the exclusion of particular viewpoints. But these do not work in a monolithic or univocal way: the field of debate over CND is complex, contradictory and often quite open. Each of its major thematics can be weighted in ways that are favourable or unfavourable to the movement. The tussles over them are often quite evident in the texts themselves, even those with a definite set of interpretations in dominance.

If this is correct, it points to the need for a positive strategy towards the public media in conjunction with the forms of self-activity. If the field is relatively open to intervention, we need to know how it is constituted, how, as it were, 'the land lies'. What are the major themes of the debate? Which themes are explicit? Which themes powerfully emergent? Which themes are everywhere present but often deeply implicit? Which themes constitute the most important resources for CND itself or its enemies? How is each theme

inflected or connected with other themes to the benefit of one side or the other? In particular, what traps are set for CND and its spokespersons, allowing easy marginalisation or rhetorical dismissal? Similarly, what are the major official vulnerabilities (of which there are some spectacular examples) and corresponding openings for CND? There are also questions about where CND can intervene. What media are particularly favourable to CND's causes and which particularly hostile? How can the movement recruit to its cause writers, researchers and media personnel and how might it use their services? Finally, there are quite crucial questions about audiences. Which particular constituencies - in terms, for example, of age, gender, race and class - have proved particularly responsive to date? How can the movement reach out to constituencies relatively untouched or hostile to its cause? What arguments and what modes of address are appropriate to different audiences? How can CND/END put together an alliance of social forces adequate to the quite formidable tasks it sets itself?

So many questions! We certainly don't pretend to be able to answer them or even that we are the first to ask them! But some such agenda - to be kicked about within the movement - would seem to us necessary to guide a more adequate strategy towards the media.

Structure of the Report

In what follows we present our research in three main parts. In PART I we are mainly concerned with some relatively crude indices of media coverage. How much attention did the media give to the events of 24 October 1981? Were there significant movements over time (especially over the sequence Friday/Saturday/Sunday/Monday)? Which media gave most space to CND and which tended to 'bury' it? What were the grosser forms of suppression or selection that can be said, fairly unequivocally, to have worked against CND? Where, so far as one can assess at this level, did CND mainly 'score'?

In PARTS II and III the argument is more thematic. Our study of the debate suggests that it is structured around a number of key themes. Sometimes these are presented quite elaborately in explicit arguments of a 'rational' kind: they are seen to be what is explicitly at stake. Factual arguments and citations are marshalled around them. Sometimes other, or the same, themes are present in another way, touched on merely, connected through connotations, to what is seen as the main issue. Themes handled in this way are often treated as self-evident and acquire a kind of second-order use. 'Peace', a major point of reference in the debate, is often used in this way. Yet other themes seem to us to structure the debate profoundly, but to be less conscious elements

within it. We shall argue later that the conventional definitions of masculinity and femininity in our society are pervasively present in the debate, whether explicitly or metaphorically.

Finally, in a concluding section we try to draw together our findings and make some recommendations.

PART I: THE OVERALL CHARACTER OF THE COVERAGE

Advance Notices; Immediate Events: Or 'Now you see it; but sometimes you don't!'

We discuss in this first section two important aspects of media coverage: the processes of 'preview' or the advance notice of the events and the media's more immediate responses to the demonstration itself. The tactical importance of these two aspects will be plain. Any event of this kind is necessarily set within a framework of meanings which is established, in large part, before the event. Previewing, in this sense, is the means by which the ground is prepared for the insertion of events within the frameworks of meaning established by a particular medium. Advance notices are also important, potentially at least, in marshalling support, giving information about events and venues and creating a sense of 'movement'.

On the other hand, the events themselves, especially events like a large demonstration with a considerable spectacle value to the media themselves, may create something of a momentum of their own, signalling the commitments of large numbers of people in a very active way. However such a demonstration is handled by the media, it carries its own meanings in banners, in speeches and in the language of numbers, of turning out and marching. As we shall see, there is no guarantee that such messages will 'get through' with the meanings given to them by participants. Nonetheless, the coverage of the demonstration is one moment when the movement acquires a very powerful voice, and for media hostile to CND this poses very real problems. It is particularly interesting, therefore, to look at the ways different media responded to the demonstration itself.

Our main conclusion under this head is that despite some limitations of 'advance notice' (some limitations of our own research; some perhaps of CND's own preparation), the rally of 24 October succeeded in securing a quite massive visibility in the media. It did so in peak listening and viewing times and across a wide range of media. The major exception here, to which we shall return in some detail, was the popular press. In part this was a product of timing: the Saturday newspapers came out too early to report the immediate impact of the demonstration; the Sundays had time to rework events into their own, overwhelmingly hostile, frameworks. But insofar as the popular press previewed the demonstration they also did so in unambiguously hostile terms. Much the same is true of some provincial newspapers and some Conservative Sunday and weekday newspapers with a more middle-class readership.

Television and Radio

The demonstration had a particularly high visibility in those media which, for technical reasons, can respond most immediately to events: the radio and television networks. The demonstration topped newscasts on the electronic media from Saturday morning to late on Sunday, with the exception of the late morning and early afternoon on the second day. The quantitative coverage on ITN and BBC I news right through to the main evening newscasts was particularly impressive. Major news items (the North/South Conference; the Croydon by-election) were easily beaten into second or third place as the following breakdown in Table 1 shows:

TABLE 1: ITN and BBC News (24 October 1981, 9.15 pm/9.30 pm)

Rank order and duration of news items

I T N		B B C	
Item	Duration	Item	Duration
Headlines		Headlines	
CND		CND	
Croydon	30"	North/South Conf.	1' 45"
Sue Barker		Sue Barker	
Clocks back			
1. CND	3' 30"	1. CND	2' 15"
2. Party Politics		2. Rome	20"
Croydon	1' 40"		
3. Thatcher comment		3. North/South	2' 10"
on Croydon	40"	4. Poland	20"
4. North/South	40"	5. Ford not reselected	2' 15"
5. Royal Tour	1' 20"	6. Croydon	1' 15"
6. Uganda Presi-		7. Cricket tour of India	35"
dent	20"		
7. Mrs. Gandhi on		8. Sports	2' 55"
Cricket	15"		
8. Sports	2' 35"		
9. Clocks back	30"		

As can be seen from the table, the BBC gave CND (plus the Rome demonstration) more time than any other item apart from sports news (remember this was a Saturday evening). ITN, however, gave CND considerably more time than did BBC and (the final accolade?) more time than sport.

This was only the most obvious of a number of interesting differences between ITV and BBC which will concern us in more detail later. Both channels, especially ITN, gave great prominence to the rally itself, some attention to the speeches (though with great selectivity and tight framing) and some space to CND's own assessments and arguments.

Radio, too, commercial and BBC, local and national, gave CND real prominence. One crude index, interesting too for changes over time, is the rank order of CND in the hourly newscasts on Radio 1, Radio 2 and LBC (the London commercial radio station). Table 2 below gives details.

TABLE 2: Radio 1 & 2 and LBC: Selected newscasts (24/25 October 1981)

Rank Order of CND as news item

Radio 1		Radio 2		LBC	
Time	Order	Time	Order	Time	Order
Sat.		Sat.		Sat.	
9.30 am	3	9.00 am	-		
10.30	2	10.00	2	10.00 am	2
11.30	1	11.00	2	11.00	1
		12.00	1		
		1.00 pm	1	1.00 pm	1 *
2.30 p.m.	1			2.00	4
3.30	1			3.00	3
5.30	1	6.00	1	6.00	1
6.30	1	7.00	1		
		8.00	1	8.00	1
		10.00	1	10.00	2
		11.00	1	11.00	3
Sun.		Sun.		Sun.	
8.30 am	1	9.00 am	1	8.00 am	3
9.30	1	10.00	1	9.00	2
10.30	3	11.00	2	10.00	6
11.30	4				
				1.00 pm	2
7.00 pm	1	5.00 pm	1	7.00	1

* Note: the low rank orders on LBC mid-Saturday were accompanied by extensive special coverage of the rally.

These radio results are especially significant. It is worth recalling that Radio 1, the most popular of the programmes, has audiences of around 7 million at peak periods (Top Forty), and of 3 million for the Saturday morning record programme Junior Choice. Radio 2 has week-end audiences of up to 2.6 million. On Radio 4, with smaller audiences, CND was the lead story also from the 2.00 pm Saturday news programme. Coverage was extensive too on local radio in London and Birmingham. Commercial local radio gave CND especially favourable coverage. This does not adequately show up on the column for LBC newscasts in Table 2. In fact, LBC was the most consistently supportive of the media which we monitored. Through Saturday it carried interviews with Bruce Kent and David Wainwright, spoke at some length with demonstrators in its report at 6.08 pm and carried a lengthy item (about 5 minutes) putting CND's case. This was followed by extensive coverage on Sunday, including the news from Europe, a further interview with Wainwright, and Peter Allen's Sunday morning phone-in, which featured E.P. Thompson.

Although our information is less complete, commercial radio in the West Midlands (BRMB and Beacon Radio) seems to have given CND and its local followers more prominence than the BBC local network. The demonstration was already the main item on BRMB newscasts by 8.00 am on Saturday; it stayed at fourth place on Radio Birmingham till 12.00. BRMB also carried interviews with local supporters, including Stuart Russell. This repeated the pattern in London, where a well-documented comparison suggests that LBC gave CND considerably more favourable attention than Radio London.

CND also figured prominently on BBC's outward-looking programme - the BBC World Service. It was the lead story on all bulletins on Saturday and occupied three minutes out of nine, an unusually large proportion for a single story. The World Service also featured our favourite Freudian slip of the day: 'Similar protests are banned - I beg you pardon, planned - for Sunday in Brussels and Paris'. Perhaps this was retribution for the fact that the World Service's coverage of the European dimensions was so scrupulously 'balanced' by contributions from the American Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Walter Strossell, and the American Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Lawrence Eagleberger!

The pattern of television and radio coverage is easier to summarise than that of the press in the early stages. Certainly, the press, as we shall see below, was less carried along by the momentum of reported events, partly for the reasons of timing already discussed.

Newspaper Coverage

Only two daily newspapers, The Guardian and Morning Star, can be said in any sense to have lent their support to the demonstration or previewed it in full, though The Guardian's leader on Monday - on the role of chance in political events - can hardly have lived up to CND's expectations.

But The Guardian certainly played an important role in the lead-up to the demonstration, carrying on Friday, for example, a critical leader on Weinberger, coverage of the European dimensions and a preview of the demonstration. The Morning Star, like the rest of the Left Press, and, among the London alternative magazines especially City Limits, produced a campaigning issue, clearly for sale on the march itself.

Two main strategies, with some inimitable variants, can be discerned in the remaining newspapers. On the whole, the weekday populars simply 'buried' CND and all its works, expelling the demonstration from their front pages, but sometimes subverting it in indirect ways on the inner pages. There was no direct mention of the coming events in the Friday or Saturday issues of the Daily Mirror, The Sun, the Daily Mail or the Daily Express. On Saturday, most of the populars featured the man whom the Express called 'The Iron General', Sir Steuart Pringle, the British marine general who was a victim of IRA bombing. The general was prominently featured, usually photographically, complete with canine friend. This was a clear indication of these newspapers' criteria of newsworthiness: Pringle was presented as the popular conservative hero, victim of terrorism, epitome of personal courage, professional warrior and patriot. Against this formidable combination of associations CND stood little chance.

On Friday The Daily Mail carried Weinberger's warning on 'the Soviet Menace', noted the disorderly barracking by 'pacifists' and, on p.27, carped discreetly at the Bronowski lecture - 'if you stuck with him this far...'. On Saturday, still keeping CND off its front page, it made its connections in, of all places, its TV report!

On the same day, the Daily Express's only mention of the rally was contained in a p.2 story headed 'Red Alert for IRA Bombers'. The item noted that Britain's defence forces were now on red alert against the IRA, reminding the readers of the Pringle bombing and concluded:

Commissioner David McNee's hunt for the six or seven strong team of bombers will be made harder this weekend when 100,000 demonstrate for nuclear disarmament.

The Daily Express's only mention of the CND rally before the event, then, was firmly placed within the context of terrorism, nail-bombs and the prudent preparations of the military and the police.

The full assault of the conservative daily populars was mainly reserved, however, till Monday. The Daily Mirror, indeed, remained almost mute till Tuesday, though it carried a picture of two toddlers fighting with CND banners on Monday, a bellicose image of CND by no means easy to find. The second strategy, by contrast, was that of the pre-emptive strike. It was pursued most energetically by The Daily Telegraph and, in a more muted way, by The Times.

Unlike the conservative populars, Saturday's Telegraph gave the fullest of previews of the demonstration, a tendency taken up again, as we shall see, on Monday. Indeed, in the words of our researcher (not a regular reader of the Telegraph) 'it went mad'. Page 1 carried the usual Pringle picture, the headline 'Yard and Army on Alert for Bombers', and noted the 'one added problem' of the CND demonstration. On p.6, however, it re-marshalled the carefully timed speeches of four Conservative members of Parliament under the headline 'Nuclear Disarmers Dodge Realities' in an item whose dominant tone was of kindly and paternal abuse. This item was accompanied by 'real world' stories about the choice of models of Trident. The Times' advance warnings were similar if more muted. Friday's Times covered Weinberger's speech, complete with 150 young nuclear disarmers 'chanting' and an opinion poll showing that 65 per cent of the population in West Germany were 'pro-NATO'. The problem for The Times as for the Telegraph was that of Western 'will'. The Times also carried troubling stories about employees in the Ministry of Defence who voted to affiliate their union to CND and Manchester's declaration of a 'nuclear-free zone'. The leader, headlined 'The Zero Option', stressed American sensitivity, the anxiety of European leaders about the forthcoming demonstrations and proposed a reading of Reagan's speeches containing our second favourite Freudian slip of the debate: they had been 'blown up out of all proportion'. On Saturday, in due confirmation of its own fears, The Times reported on the front page how support for the anti-nuclear marches was growing.

We wish to add one further note on the issue of 'advance notice'.

It relates especially to CND's youthful following. Given that the rally is universally considered to have symbolised CND's popularity among the young, it is worth asking whether this constituency is given enough attention and, where addressed, whether it is addressed with sufficient sensitivity. The issue is especially important because of the socially diverse character of this constituency, especially as it is organised through an enthusiasm for popular musical forms. The intersections between CND and the broad politicization of sections of the popular audience is, in our opinion, of

first-rate importance. Some evidence is available to us in the music press and from 'talk' programmes on Radio 1, which will be reviewed in PARTS II and III below.

Finer Judgements: BBC and ITN News on the Rally

So far we have concentrated on quantitative indices of coverage or on the more obvious strategies of suppression and gross selectivity. We want to look now at finer qualitative comparisons between two media which, on the whole, gave CND extensive and not unfavourable coverage on the day of the demonstration: the ITN and BBC I newscasts from 1.15 and 1.00 pm to 9.10 and 9.30 pm respectively. Our double negative ('not unfavourable') is deliberate here, since one of the points that comes out in the comparison is how very difficult it is to reach a judgement on this issue through textual analysis alone. We first examine those elements common to the two sets of reports, then consider the major differences.

In many ways the two sets of newscasts were very similar in their patterns of selection. Both laid stress on personal or on-the-spot reports and used lots of footage of the demonstration itself. After a few sentences from the newscaster in the studio, the scene quickly changed to Hyde Park and the London streets and to comments from Nicholas Mitchell (BBC) and David Smith (ITN). Less time was given to the speeches and then only very selectively. Almost exclusive attention was given to Michael Foot and Tony Benn as well-known national politicians. 'The historian, Professor E.P. Thompson', as the BBC called him at 1.00 pm, appeared on the platform but inaudibly, drowned by the commentator's voice-over and, in the earlier BBC newscasts, robbed of the microphone by a protestor - we shall return to the BBC's construction of this incident later. Of the other speakers only Fennner Brockway was heard to speak and he only on BBC. On both channels more coverage was given to Foot than anyone else, in our opinion one of the least convincing of the platform speakers, relying heavily on well established clichés.

It is worth noting that other items in this newscast were the Croydon by-election (both channels), Labour's conflicts and 'credibility' and reselection of Labour candidates. The effects of this presentation are ambiguous. Although Foot and Benn drew wide media attention, CND is connected here with an already existing media representation: the reduction of an important conflict of political principle within the Labour Party to a matter of personalities and electoral liabilities. There is a tendency also to reduce CND's own programme to the chances of winning support from an alternative government. Overall, this structure marginalizes the significance of CND's own purpose

and activities. More pragmatically, concentration on the Labour Party diverted attention from the rally itself.

Another common element was the treatment of numbers on the march and in Hyde Park. Both networks took the police estimates (initially 100,000; latterly 150,000) as the most authoritative source, but accepted the police estimates as, most commonly, 'tens of thousands' (BBC 1, 1.00 pm; ITN, 1.15 pm; ITN, 5.35 pm). Once accepted the origins of such estimates and their partisan character were obscured. CND estimates were, by contrast, always cited by source, and usually in ways that implied scepticism: the CND figure of 250,000 was always 'claimed' by the organisers, or 'hoped for'. The more modest estimates continued to co-exist rather oddly with the increasing recognition by both BBC and ITN that the demonstration had been a major success.

This, indeed, was the last common element between the two networks. Both grew noticeably warmer to CND as the day progressed, especially the BBC, which began (and ended) rather more detached from events than ITN. According to ITN, the rally was 'one of the biggest demonstrations in years' (1.15), 'one of the biggest protest marches ever seen in Britain' (5.35) and 'one of the biggest ban-the-bombs ever' (9.15). According to the BBC, the rally moved from being 'what's claimed to be one of the biggest anti-nuclear protests held in London in recent years' (an extremely circumspect formula at 1.00) to 'one of the biggest protests against nuclear weapons for many years' (still rather ungenerous at 9.40). Again, as the demonstration itself gained momentum, both networks, especially ITN, reflected something of the excitement of marchers and organisers themselves, with 'hopes surpassed', and news of crowds taking four (ITN) or five (BBC) hours to pass a single spot. As the BBC put it:

CND said the size of today's London rally is proof that the movement has regained its momentum and they promise further opposition to plans for a new generation of nuclear weapons.

Or, as David Smith for ITN noted, demonstrators went home saying 'This was only the beginning'.

It is our view, on balance, that ITN's coverage of the demonstration was more favourable to CND than the BBC's. In what follows we shall give our reasons for this judgement and also some grounds for further reservations. First, as we have seen, ITN gave more air time to the demonstrations than did the BBC. As we have also seen, ITN was less grudging than the BBC in its implied assessments of the rally's success. This coincided with our overall reading of the tone and character of the two reports, both visually and in commentary. The BBC's report was always somewhat detached from the events

portrayed: in commentary, CND claims and aspirations were systematically distanced from the implied sympathies of the audience, the hidden 'we' of the report. Words like 'say', 'claimed' and 'hoping' figured largely in the BBC commentary, always inviting a sceptical response. There was a tendency, too, for the BBC's version to highlight the not-quite-serious aspects of the event, even its nuisance value. It was noted that marchers wore 'a variety of special outfits for the occasion', that the marchers were 'mostly young' and that 'the organisers said they wanted a festival atmosphere'. It was stressed (at 6.00 pm) that the march had caused 'traffic disruption on a wide scale'. By 9.30 this had become 'traffic disruption on an enormous scale', an angle on the rally with some similarity to the items we have noticed in the Conservative press. Perhaps the most dubious aspect of the BBC's early coverage (corrected, however, in later reports) was the prominence given to the platform incident when a young man snatched the microphone from E.P. Thompson. On the 6.00 pm news the incident figured prominently. 'But there were some voices of dissent', the commentator noted. He also said that other speakers were heckled. The angle of the BBC's platform shots highlighted the black and red banners of the anarchist group, and the sound track which accompanied part of Michael Foot's speech (where he stumbled four times over the same words) also seemed to make the anarchist chants especially audible and, by implication, effective. In general, the BBC's visuals contained fewer close-ups and head-height shots of the marchers, lingered less on fewer of the banners and symbols of the marchers than the ITN report, and more often viewed the march head-on, from a height and at a distance. The effect of this visual handling was to reduce our involvement in the march, to view it, as it were, at a greater distance and with more detachment, not merely physically and photographically, but emotionally too. Nicholas Mitchell's report was noticeably more detached than David Smith's, using to a lesser extent the licence of the personal report.

ITN's coverage, by contrast, entered the spirit of the event with much less inhibition, in the spirit of people 'having their say'. Visuals lingered longer on the banners, slogans and dummies of nuclear victims and, in an earlier report, contained a very long sequence on a colourfully dressed jazz band (dutifully consulting a policeman). ITN gave more prominence to the more telling CND slogans and banners:

'Europe is not Reagan's to sacrifice'

' 1945 Hiroshima

1983 Euroshima'

It used more closeups and head-height shots and mingled more among the crowd. David Smith's report conveyed a stronger sense of the momentum of the

event. It stressed the growth of CND as a movement, that 'morale has never been higher in the anti-nuclear movement', that CND had grown 'ten-fold' in the last 18 months, and that it had strong allies in Europe. It cited the 250,000 who had marched in Bonn and indicated 'a growing body of public opinion', strongly anti-American, 'feeding off Reagan's suggestion that nuclear war could be limited to Europe'. The report ended on a similarly 'activist' note: Foot's promise to disarm. It also listed, though it did not show, other platform speakers, including the victim of Hiroshima and the German general. Far from picking up (and unfairly amplifying) 'voices of dissent', it tended to minimise 'incidents' and to stress the peacefulness of the event:

It was colourful, noisy and overwhelmingly peaceful,
the biggest demonstration for decades in this country.

Our main reservation concerns the fact that ITN certainly offered materials for a reading alternative to this invocation of an energetic activism. There were two, admittedly subordinate, themes which some readers, already hostile to the event, could pick up and use in this way. The ITN's stress on the 'lived experience' of the march, especially in its visuals, and its tendency to treat the event as a very colourful spectacle, permitted a kind of marginalisation of the event, through its themes of class, gender and youth. As we shall see in PART II, this was exploited more consciously by the Conservative press. Secondly, ITN certainly speculated on the general political character of the event, and especially its leftist character. It stressed anti-Americanism, the popularity of Tony Benn, the 'undeniable favourite', and risked the judgement that it was a 'day dominated by the left'. Against this, in a more populist mood, it noted 'the huge variety of people' present and the fact that they came 'from many walks of life'. But it is certainly the case, in our view, that elements of ITN's coverage were susceptible to the reading that here was a domestic festival of the left, dominated by a 'they' who were rather sympathetically viewed, but who nonetheless were definitely not 'us'.

In the last analysis, then, our assessment of the coverage of both networks is subject to reservations about actual 'readerships'. We are quite unclear, for example, what a predominantly working-class audience for ITN's construction of the rally would actually have made of its presentations. We might add, as a final caveat, that ITN carried rather less news about the European dimensions of the movement than its rival, which on the day of the rally carried quite a long sequence from the Rome demonstration and drew attention to similar rallies in other European countries.

After the Event: Recuperations and Open Questions

This section is necessarily briefer than those that precede. There are two main reasons here. First, a fuller account of the longer-term effects of the rally would have required considerably more research time than we had available. An adequate assessment, even on the level of media reporting, would have required a longer time-span than the few days after the rally itself. It would be interesting, for example, to establish the 'media life-span' of the London rally and the European demonstrations which accompanied and followed it. For how long did these events continue to be a point of reference in discussions of the issue of 'defence' and allied subjects? What were the forms of the subsequent 'life' of the events: for what state of affairs were they subsequently taken as evidence and how long did their media effects persist? Such an account would have to include what appears, on the surface, the most palpable of the effects of the demonstrations: the modifications, in rhetoric at least, of Reagan's own bellicosity and the tendency for leaders of Western European states to take a more independent line. The events in Poland, of course, have latterly cut across the whole debate, strengthening American 'resolve', but at the same time deepening the divisions with some European allies. What part did CND and its allies play in these visible movements of international politics? Secondly, and more pragmatically, there is a danger that any comprehensive review, at this stage, of the themes used in debates after the demonstration would anticipate the substantive treatments in the second part of our report.

In what follows, then, we limit ourselves to stating two main hypotheses which later research may or may not test further. First, it is one of the key problems of a movement like CND, which speaks most imperatively through large-scale popular mobilisations, that, dramatic demonstrations once over, the initiative rapidly passes to other hands. In the media themselves 'normality' rapidly re-asserts itself. Those sources of information, comment and the definition of events - the media themselves, the major government spokespersons, the military, the diplomats - which have a persistent or structural dominance, re-assert their influence. Secondly, and linked to this, there is a concerted attempt, by these and other agencies, to present a powerful retrospective gloss on those events which have threatened to upset the normal course of control. The greater the upset, the more strenuous the attempts at recuperation or re-incorporation. In particular, from the point of view of an analysis concerned with meanings, attempts are made to ~~reinforce~~, trivialise, marginalise or stigmatise the movement in question. One implication of this analysis, if correct, is that the aftermath of such events, especially the immediate aftermaths, are, paradoxically, key moments for

fresh interventions by CND, in an attempt to sustain and reinforce the initiative momentarily seized.

The Media Life of Demonstrations

These arguments can be illustrated, if tentatively, from the work we did on the coverage of Sunday, Monday and Tuesday (with some individual items from days later in the week). The passing of initiative to the dominant institutions and to the media themselves was especially clear. It was a feature of the period, however, that the more direct newsworthy presence of CND and its allies was sustained for an unusually long period. This was partly a result of the linked demonstrations across Europe, a very important and powerful aspect of recent anti-nuclear strategy and tactics. We might add, too, that E.P. Thompson's campaigning, very energetic in the aftermath of the events, suggested a keen sense of the importance of post-hoc definition.

Certainly there is a sense in which CND dominated the news-related media over a whole weekend. One quantitative index was the newscasts on the most popular radio channels - Radios 1 and 2. As Table 2 (p.11) shows, though the demonstrations dropped to second (Radio 2) and third or fourth place (Radio 1) by mid-morning on Sunday, the European demonstrations pushed the item to the top again by 5.00 pm (Radio 2) or 7.00 p.m. (Radio 1). Similarly on LBC, whose coverage was, again, on Sunday very favourable, the item moved from between second and sixth on early newscasts to first by 7.00 pm. These newscasts often gave a strong sense of the momentum of the movement and even of some oscillation by American Defence spokesmen, Weinberger being quoted, for instance, as saying that the demonstrations were 'understandable', 'should be taken seriously' though 'were going the wrong way about getting the result everyone wanted: no war' (Radio 2, 5.00 pm). As framed in LBC newscasts the sense of leading spokespersons being overtaken by events was made quite explicit:

In London American Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger said he doesn't believe the protests mean very much but it's estimated that up to a quarter of a million people took part in the rallies... (LBC, 800 am, Sunday, 25 October)

LBC, indeed, constructed at least one further news item of its own.

E.P. Thompson was the main contributor to Peter Allen's Sunday morning phone-in on this network. In the course of the programme, Thompson talked about the possibility of American attempts to destabilise the new socialist government in Greece on account of its attitude to Nato. At 1.00 pm this became an additional item in LBC's coverage of the demonstrations ('E.P. Thompson is warning...') immediately following the news of the rallies in Paris and Brussels. The newscast was closely followed by summaries of phone-

ins on nuclear weapons during the week, including edited highlights, and a programme called The Decision-makers, which focused on disarmament. By the time its 7.00 pm news led with the Paris and Brussels demos, LBC had created a very strong impression of the crescendo of CND activity.

Coverage of the demonstration held up in a similar way in the television newscasts on Sunday. The demonstrations also occupied the front pages of The Sunday Times, The Observer, The Sunday Telegraph and the Sunday Express, usually accompanied by pictures. In the News of the World, Sunday People and Sunday Mirror, the CND item appeared on p.2 or 3. Extensive coverage continued in the daily press on Monday, testimony, mainly, to the determination of the Conservative media to shatter any 'illusions' their readerships might have formed over the last 48 hours! By Tuesday, however, the direct impact of the demonstration had certainly begun to fade, although there were some late responses. On Wednesday 28th, there was a classic Nationwide interview with Bruce Kent, on Monday 26th the programme on E.P.Thompson went out on ITV, and on Tuesday 27th the Daily Mirror (which seems to have suffered a mild form of paralysis over the issue) eventually came out with a (rather hostile) leader.

Restoring Normality

The broad patterns of recuperation and containment (i.e. the attempted restoration of the normal view of the world) can also be traced. It occurred quite generally across the media and was certainly not limited to the more conservative newspapers. The predominant mood of this assessment, even among the more favourable media, was to return us all to rationality, sensible calculation and 'the real world', after the understandable but heady excitements of the weekend. As the headline to Paul Johnson's piece in the Mail on Monday put it:

The CND orators rant... the young have a great day out.
But it all adds up to ... 150,000 reasons not to panic.

(Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p. 6)

This line was not surprising in newspapers (the majority) that had consistently buried CND before the event, or in The Daily Telegraph, which continued 'to go mad' on the subject on Monday, with a total of 40 paragraphs and four pictures, plus editorial, a special feature article, and a report of the European demonstrations, a cartoon, and an item on the rubbish left by the demonstrators ('Anti-Nuclear Fall-Out')! But a similar line was to be found in media which had charted the rise of the movement with some sympathy, or at

least in some detail. In our own locality the Birmingham Evening Mail (a Conservative newspaper which often takes a Thatcherite line) is a particularly interesting example. Unlike the Birmingham Post which was hostile throughout, and the Leicester Mercury that ignored the issue altogether, the Mail gave quite sympathetic coverage to preparations for the rally, finding a useful local angle in CND's local leadership (Birmingham Evening Mail, 21.10.81, p.6). CND's local leadership, for their part, seem to have laid some stress on supplying useful material for the paper. In the early coverage, then, CND was presented as sincere, active and well-meaning. On the day, and in subsequent issues, the Mail returned to its dominant attitude, best described as 'CND is all very well, but what about the grim realities?'. The Nationwide interview with Bruce Kent on Wednesday 28th was framed and structured in a similar way. The item began with Sue Lawley asking how seriously Western leaders were taking the anti-nuclear movement. Nationwide then proceeded to answer its own question, stressing Western solidarities, Nott's charge of 'appeasement', and the Government's unchanging policies of buying Trident and allowing Cruise missiles. As Lawley then put it: "That puts the ball very firmly back in the disarmers' court". It was in this context that the pre-recorded and carefully scripted interview with Bruce Kent was broadcast. The interview was conducted in a way which other research has shown to be typical of Nationwide's style⁷: the interviewer facing us in the three-quarter shot, standing for us, 'the Nationwide viewers', and in complicity with 'our' common-sense questionings; the interviewee, usually in profile, the object of 'our' investigation. In this particular interview, 'our common-sense questioning' bore a startling resemblance to the standpoint of the Western governments, and were of a particularly 'tough' and 'realistic' character: how, in fact, could CND guarantee that without nuclear weapons Britain would be able to deter 'an aggressor'?

PART II: THEMATIC STRUCTURING OF THE DEBATE: PEACE, POLITICS
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Introduction

Babies

The truth is that the
CND revival is discom-
forting because, like a
lot of people, I have
been dithering somewhere
in the middle of the
argument for most of my adult
life, and it is about time
I made my mind up.

It would help, I think,
if the CND propagandists
would stop describing the
effects of a nuclear holocaust
as if they alone are opposed
to frying babies.

There are quite a lot of people
who wish to retain an independent
deterrent and are also in
favour of babies.

Some of them even

continue to give birth to
babies.

We ditherers would
find it helpful, too, if the
CND were more careful
about the company it keeps.

The movement was half killed
by the communists and the Trots
in the Sixties and it could easily
happen again.

If the communists are so hot
for nuclear disarmament then they
should put their case to the Russians
and Eastern Europeans.

After all, it is their rockets
that will fry our babies.

(from 'How can you ever trust
the men who hold the rockets?',
The Sun, 26.10.81, p.6)

Most of the themes which we want to explore in PART II of this report are to be found in this and similar commentaries. In what follows we want to dig out both the explicit and implicit themes of the debate, as they structured, for example, the responses of journalistic 'heavies' like Julian Critchley (The Daily Telegraph), Lord George Brown (Sunday Express) and Paul Johnson (Daily Mail). We shall be asking both about CND's weaknesses in this field of debate and its strengths (for on most themes, depending how they are inflected, CND stands both to win and lose). As we noted in the INTRODUCTION, some of these themes are explicit: they are carried, as it were, on the very surface of the debate. Our first theme in PART II is of this kind. Evidently, the debate is about 'peace' and how to secure it, though on closer inspection even 'peace' proves to be no simple uncontentious notion. Our second choice of theme - Britain's place in the world - is scarcely less explicit, though the dominant versions of 'Britain's place' more often act as the premises of Conservative arguments ('the Western Alliance'; 'the threat of the USSR') than matters to be argued out. CND's problem in this area is to encourage us to go behind the conservative assumptions and to insist that this is not the only British option. Our third theme - the explicitly political implications of the debate - is, in our view, the most powerfully emergent one. We have in mind the issues very sharply raised in

Harriet Harman's speech on October 24 about the 'secret state', but also the broader and emergent critique of 'parliamentary democracy' which is implicit in CND's forms of action and organisation, and in conservative defences of 'Parliament'.

Our last four themes are different in kind to our first three. They are not so obviously what the debate is 'about'. They are, however, powerful principles by which the debate itself is structured, in ways that seem to us only partially conscious, so far as many participants are concerned. A knowledge of these principles of organisation would help us to understand more clearly what is at stake in 'CND' and just how far this powerfully evocative movement is from being a 'single issue' campaign. CND, rather, is becoming, once again, a very powerful carrier of some of the most important currents and conflicts in the society as a whole.

We wish to stress, in particular, four main and partially hidden thematics of the debate. The first of these is youth, perhaps the most evident of our four last themes, which comprise PART III of this report. CND is a connotatively youthful movement: what is at stake and what are the strengths and limitations of this identification? Similarly, we have noted a very powerful and persistent gender structuring of the debate, including a quite extraordinary explosion of the language of male potency (and emasculation) in the defenders of deterrence, and a tendency to present CND not only as youthful but also as primarily feminine, conforming, that is, to the female stereotype in our society. What exactly is at stake in this structuring of the debate? Our third theme is still more hidden: the class character of the debate or the ways in which class is handled within it. There are even fewer direct references to class and class relations in the coverage than there are explicit references to gender, yet class remains an important element both in the structuring of the media audience and as an aspect of the portrayal of CND. Finally, we look at the most hidden theme of all, the race dimensions of the debate. It is only latterly that we have become more aware of this theme ourselves, especially through the now massively evident Euro-centricity of the whole debate and the pervasive image of 'proliferation'. Such images seem common to both sides in the debate, which leads us to ask, admittedly somewhat rhetorically at this stage, whether the debate is not seriously limited, in its radical potential, by a securely 'imperial' or 'European' frame of reference.

Two further introductory points should be made here. First, throughout PART II, we have primarily used the press. This is partly because we were particularly interested in the case against CND, partly because of the greater stability of the written text. TV and radio documentaries, no matter how

'in depth', tend to flash by and make a challenging but sequential argument difficult to hold onto. A written text, on the other hand, can be read and re-read at the reader's own pace, enabling a 'building' of new information onto the already-known, rather than a catch-all-or-catch-nothing.

Second, we point, in a preliminary way, to one conspicuous feature of the press. As we note below (p.31) different newspapers address different audiences, especially as constructed by class.

1. FIGHTING OVER PEACE: The Struggle to Appropriate Meaning in the Mass Media

... as long as Nato - and Nato governments - fight the Peace Movements on the ground of their choosing, 'peace', we shall get the worst of the argument. We should shift the ground to where the debate properly belongs, namely politics, and the case for collective security would become overwhelming. But we have little time to lose (The Daily Telegraph, 26.10.81, p.16)

Thus a Conservative MP, Julian Critchley (rapporteur of the North Atlantic Assembly) ended his attack on the Peace Movements that had demonstrated their strength and unity the previous weekend across Europe. This quotation is taken from one of the number of hostile responses in the press, which consisted, often, of simply printing uncritically statements by government 'defence' spokespersons (always male, of course). It should be recognised that occupiers of such official positions have direct and easy access to the media, quite different from the sort of access accorded to officials of CND. Such 'experts' have been described elsewhere as 'primary definers'. Their pronouncements acquire legitimation by virtue of their official status and so their definitions and logic structure the whole debate. These spokespersons were ready to mobilise this practice before and after the demonstration in order to reaffirm support for the 'official' defence policy, and to counteract any impression CND might have made. To the extent that the media publicised these statements, they could be said to have acquiesced to British and American propaganda in support of present nuclear weapons policy.

As Critchley himself identified, there is a struggle to appropriate the meaning of the word 'peace'. Despite their positions as primary definers, spokespersons like Critchley do betray anxiety about CND's challenge to the ways in which they have set the terms of the debate. In other words, he identifies as a site of struggle the areas which we try to indicate in this report: 'the ground to where the debate properly belongs'. He acknowledges

that CND has had such success in presenting the anti-nuclear case in terms of peace that the Government should abandon that terrain and map out a new one constructed on the grounds of national security. Other representatives of the pro-nuclear faction, such as Lord George-Brown are, however, not prepared to abandon such a key tactical position and advocate a stronger fight to keep the meanings of 'peace' within the ambit of their own arguments.

It should be noted from the outset that the term 'peace' has a set of powerful cultural meanings which are sufficiently close together to give the illusion of having some kind of transcendent, transparent and unified meaning. Thus 'peace' can be taken to mean some absolute good-in-itself, with which it is hard to argue. However, the term has possibilities of ambiguity which can alter its meaning dramatically, even to the point of endorsing opposing political positions, depending on the context in which it appears.

It is this absolute, positive meaning of 'peace' which, although illusory, makes it so important for each side of the debate to annex the term for its own purposes. Within these competing frameworks (discourses) its meaning undergoes several changes, all of them socially determined. A study of these social meanings allow us to separate out a number of debates and conflicts which are key areas in discussing the prevention of nuclear war. These distinct meanings have tended to be hidden or overlooked in evaluating the debate. The one term 'peace' has many meanings, which it is useful not to condense into a single generality. In what follows we roughly categorise the variety of meanings given to the word 'peace' in the media reports/editorials/features devoted to the CND rally.

i) 'Peace' and Violence

This paradoxical link was made most commonly by reports emphasising the absence of violence on the demonstration itself. This linked the event to a whole set of constructions about the usually (implied) violent nature of demonstrations, and of confrontation with law and order. The classic example was in some editions of the Sunday Mirror: 'Police adopted a low-key, softly-softly approach and the protest passed off peacefully' (25.10.81, p.3). There is an amazing causal link implied here - that the demonstration was peaceful because of the actions of the police. What the reader is meant to feel is that the peacefulness of the event, which was undoubtedly of great advantage/benefit to CND, was due not to the participants but to the police, and that CND cannot therefore claim credit for it.

The term 'softly-softly' is itself open to debate, as it suggests a toning down or absence of police which, as those present and other media reports confirm (The Sunday Times, 25.10.81, p.1), was not necessarily the case. This law and order interpretation of the Sunday Mirror comment seems to us by far the most plausible, but it is worth noting that if policing had not been 'softly-softly', it would have produced violence. It may be that there is a further, even more radical, reading: that it is police brutality that causes violence on demonstrations.

ii) 'Peace' in Europe in Our Time

'Peace' is also frequently used to mean no more than a relatively long-term absence of total war in Europe. This meaning was given a lot of space in the Sunday Mirror and The Sunday Telegraph, most notably in the former when, on Sunday (p.16), its cartoonist, Cummings, awarded the Atom Bomb the 'Nobel Peace Prize for deterring war for 36 years'. Following on from this, Lord George-Brown was able to argue that the Peace Movements were actually the 'War-Mongers' (see below). Much of the tenability of this argument seems to reside in the notion of an insular 'British' viewpoint and a correspondingly limited notion of an isolated Europe. Thinking in this way neglects the multitude of intricate economic and political links that fuse those European states to the 'rest of the world'. Although this version of peace is crucial for the whole argument about deterrence, its limited and partial nature can easily be shown. It refers only to international relations and not, for example, to the domestic war in Ireland.

In its dominant use it is excessively Eurocentric in emphasis. Insofar as the rest of the world appears, it is an empty terrain for the struggles of the Great Powers. In this light, the following comment by Caspar Weinberger may not appear as bizarre as the newspaper found it:

In response to a question about where a war might begin, he (Weinberger) gave this bizarre answer: "The war is going on now. What is the campaign in the Carribean? What is the Soviet incursion in Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and all those places? These represent strategic steps towards the strategic goal of enveloping Europe."

(The Sunday Times, 25.10.81, p.6)

As this points out, albeit from the point of view of one of the aggressors, the absence of perceivable war in Europe is a function of the displacement of that war to the Third World. It is surely possible that the next use of nuclear weapons against an actual population will take place there.

This denial of any relationship between economic/political activity in Europe and events elsewhere can again be seen in this example:

One fringe group even carried a banner calling for
'Land Rights for Aborigines'. (Sunday Express, 25.10.81, p.1.)

There are all sorts of meanings packed into this sentence which are worth examining; these include the racist assumption that Aborigines are 'other', definitely not part of our world and possibly comical; that their claim to land rights in a country far away can be of only the most marginal interest; that only the most extreme and dotty 'fringe' group would want to identify themselves as interested in this obscure issue; that it has no connection with a peace demonstration in London, anyway. Wholly lost or buried is any conception of the actual situation. The Aboriginal struggle over their own territory is intimately connected with the discovery there of uranium - an unforeseen possibility when the white conquerors first considered returning limited land rights to the indigenous population from whom they had taken them. The need for uranium by the nuclear states/industries, and the significant amount of capital/profits involved make the Aboriginal struggle to secure adequate land rights a site of crucial importance in the development of a global nuclear economy. It is not simply that the connections are distorted through biased reporting, but that the very existence of the salient facts that reveal the connections in the first place is totally denied.

The centrality of ex-colonial definitions is further explored in the section on race. There is certainly a widespread assumption that only war in Europe 'counts' as war, and this ability of a specific group (white, male, ruling class) to promulgate its own version of 'peace' is a problem for CND.

iii) 'Peace' as Pacifism and Emasculation

'Peace' or 'pacifist' is used here to refer to CND and other European Peace Movements. If the Press managed to mystify European geography and recent diplomacy, then they murdered the history of the Peace Movements, actually holding them responsible for past conflicts. Take Lord George-Brown on World War II:

That war was made inevitable by those who protested the most against it. The Peace Pledge Union with its peace ballot, the Oxford Union, with its notorious 'will-not-fight' resolution.

(Sunday Express, 25.10.81, p.16)

This is in keeping with a notion of a decay in national will. Right-wing historians and social analysts assert that it was pacifists who led Mussolini and Hitler 'to believe that they could dominate the world at very little cost to themselves' (Lord George-Brown, op. cit.). Popular feature articles

in particular maligned some of the more recent Peace Movements (and omitted others like the anti-Vietnamese war campaign in the USA). Some papers caricatured and ridiculed the whole project:

European peace movements are not new. In the late 10th and early 11th centuries, anti-war protests, backed by the clergy, burst out across the Continent. The militants forcibly occupied local castles chanting 'Peace, Peace'. The crusades followed shortly afterwards. And indeed the most consistent characteristic of peace protests through the centuries has been their lack of long term success.

(Evening Standard, 26.10.81, p.7)

So, militants were around even then. With the substitution of 'communists' for 'clergy' this could appear in the middle of some of the reports of the CND rally and not appear too out of place.

Behind much of this argument about the negative effects of Peace Movements there lurked some thoroughly masculinist assumptions. The play on meanings around the words 'pacifist', 'neutral', and 'unilateral' (how many people know precisely what that last word means?) have deep cultural reverberations. The Thesaurus gives in association with the word pacifist: 'man of peace, neutral, civilian, women and children'. To be a man in our culture you have to endorse violence on a grand scale, and to be a 'real man', get in on some of the State's monopoly of legitimate violence (the hero-warrior of The Professionals or the SAS). The extent of this buried connection reveals itself in dismissive remarks about the 'pacifist, pro-gay-rights William Pitt', Liberal MP for Croydon (the Sunday Express, 25.10.81, p.16), and the extraordinary statement by Critchley that 'A neutral Europe would be the eunuch in the harem of the great powers'. Just who our rampant, weapon-waving State is screwing at the moment remains unsaid! More seriously, as we argue in the section on gender, contesting the orthodoxy of deterrence involves questioning dominant definitions of masculinity - especially the association of masculine self-identity with violence.

iv) 'Peace' as the Universal, Apolitical Desire

In one curious respect, though this is possibly by far the most common-sense understanding of the word, it was the least conspicuous (in terms of our categorisations) in the press. This may have been because of the overwhelming arguments in favour of CND's position from this site of meaning - which in turn has led to the invention of a variety of other meanings for the word 'peace', in an effort to take back some of this ground. 'Naivete', 'moral absolutism', 'emotionalism', 'irrationalism' and 'idealism' were all terms of abuse hurled at those who would otherwise have been seen as demonstrating a desire for this meaning of 'peace'. The Conservative Press simply could not use the word in this context, except by attempting to dislocate

its meaning by inserting it in inverted commas:

The foot-soldiers of 'Peace' protest are overwhelmingly young people whose idealism, inexperience and 'alienation' are exploited, pandered to, often no doubt well-meaningly canalised by leaders of various kinds.

(The Daily Telegraph, 26.10.61, p. 61)

In ideological terms, this does seem to be CND's strongest area, although it might be unwise simply to rely on this alone: straight economic arguments may be the next step to whittling away the support for the Conservative line. It was notable how some journalists found this meaning of peace very difficult to handle, as can be seen in Akass' ditherings at the beginning of PART II.

v) 'Peace' as an Alternative Future

As few ^{of} the papers (except the Morning Star) celebrated the CND event, it is not surprising that alternative futures to nuclear war, or the threat of war, were totally absent from the reports and discussions of the issues at stake. Alternative futures of this kind would require the placing of CND in the context of a broader politics.

The frequently conservative character of the media may be judged by their concentration on the first two meanings sketched above. Their use of the third meaning was invariably pejorative or ambiguous. In other words, the press usually used 'peace' in its more limited and closed meanings. Meaning i), for example, remains firmly in the narrow confines of the law and order framework. Meaning v), by contrast, opens up a whole series of debates about long-term methods of resolving social, economic and political tensions and contradictions, of which the future of nuclear arms is only one. The problem for CND, to which we shall return, is how to open up the wider meanings.

2. BRITAIN AND THE WORLD

If only we knew

The most marked difference in the treatment of the international situation is between the tabloid and non-tabloid press. Especially in the non-tabloid press 'the international situation' is very much the stuff of feature articles and editorials. Usually placed well after the hard facts of the daily reportage and away from the sport, such analyses presume a readership with the surplus time to spend pondering columns of argument about events not so readily relatable to most people's immediate lives. The counterpart in the electronic media is the 'in-depth' documentary or commentary on the Panorama

model. We could go on to build a caricature of this readership as cigar-smoking, port-drinking armchair statesmen - undoubtedly middle-class and often highly influential. By contrast, the near-total absence of any such backgrounding of the disarmament issue in the popular press does warrant particular focusing.

For if the provision of any information that 'counts' - suspect though it may be - in 'informed debate' is restricted to a minority which reads the non-tabloids, then the prospect of the development of any critical, popular perspective on the real complexity of extra-domestic concerns will be slight. Instead, popular familiarity with the international determinants of everyday life will continue to be reworked in the manner described below - one that is very much recognisable as, in the more exact sense of the word, propaganda.

What follows, then, is roughly divided along the traditional qualities/tabloids axis. The concentration on the press is due to a presumption that a retrievable form of information is necessary for any lasting comprehension of the complexity of the disarmament issue.

Nor have we aimed to supply an extensive 'catalogue of absences' of substantive issues - such as the arms trade and its links with the military establishment - that simply were not raised. CND readers will presumably be familiar with this gamut of silenced areas. Rather, this section concentrates on the limited existing discussion, the parameters of popular understanding as presented in the press, and the means by which information about the international situation is kept so restricted.

Finally, some implications are drawn out - both for CND's role in any 'informed debate' as it is currently constructed and for any hope of CND's widening its constituency further among those who read their papers in bus-queues rather than armchairs.

'Nato is THE peace movement' (Julian Critchley, The Daily Telegraph, 26.10.81, p. 16)

The threat to the preservation of the Nato alliance, and especially its Atlantic linkage, was the dominant organising theme of the feature articles and editorials in the qualities. Critchley warned explicitly of the political consequences, as he saw them, of the Euro-neutrality of the peace movements:

Would a neutral Europe retain its independence: it would not. The Soviet Union has long harboured the hope that the United States would be effectively removed from the European scene, leaving Soviet military supremacy as the backdrop of European politics. A neutral Europe would be the eunuch in the harem of the great powers.

(The Daily Telegraph, 26.10.81, p.16)

Significantly, he advocated the abandonment of the argument over peace in favour of the political one of collective security, a point not lost on the author of the adjacent editorial:

The Cruise-Pershing 2 deployment is now the acid test of what is both an absolute minimum of flexible response deterrent capability and of Europe's political and defensive will. If this minimum cannot be achieved the result will not only be that a prudent America will have no incentive to continue exposing its 350,000 men in Europe and accepting escalating nuclear risks in its homeland for a militarily lost cause in Europe ... A panic-stricken Europe, which had thus suicidally deprived itself of American protection, would be as much at the mercy of the Kremlin as Poland would be now but for the courage of its people.

(The Daily Telegraph, op. cit.)

As in many similar representations of the situation, deterrence is a presumed fact of life. The real concern is that the peace movements may lessen American 'incentive' to provide the material means of deterrence. If peace is to be achieved through Nato, and Nato achieves peace through a strategy of collective security, then the only tactical means of assuring peace ('in Europe') is by subordinating European qualms to the interests of the most powerful member of the collective, The United States of America.

This collapsing of strategic national, and even continental, interests into short-term diplomatic pragmatism structures most of the non-tabloid features and editorials. They are a curious blend of raw information (missile numbers and deployment dates etc.), and diplomatic analysis. The Sunday Times feature (25.10.81, p.5), for example, is co-authored by their defence correspondent and their man in Washington, but takes the form of a political biography of Caspar Weinberger. Certainly, Weinberger was a focus because of his presence here for the Nuclear Planning Group meeting, but the extraordinarily high profile his responses to the European demonstrations were given by all the media, usually over those of national leaders, is further evidence of the pivotal role the American administration was seen to play in any effective implications of the demonstrations.

Ironically, however, it is the Reagan administration itself that is the wild card in this scenario. On the front page of the same issue of The Daily Telegraph already quoted (26.10.81), a story from Washington lists no less than three contradictory reactions from the White House.

It was Reagan himself who provided the famous gaffe the week before that also informs some of the features and editorials, often taken as a means of explaining the size of the demonstrations.

"Don't talk about Suez, go and look at the Berlin Wall" (Anthony Buck, Con. MP, Talkabout, Radio 1, 27.10.81)

So the qualities by no means provided a free flow of 'neutral' information suitable for independent decision making. The 'rational argument' appealed for by The Daily Telegraph editorialist (26.10.81) amounted to pragmatic capitulation to existing U.S. dominance of Western European defence strategies. Nevertheless, this is a proffered argument, often made available in highly extended form.

The populars could hardly stand accused of such indulgence. Only one of the three extended commentaries published in the popular press could be said to have even attempted a backgrounding exercise. This was Lord George-Brown's extraordinary 'The Nuclear Protesters Who Could Actually Spark Off a War' (Sunday Express, 25.10.81, p.16); and the tabloid editorials all worked through popular association rather than any kind of arguments as such.

Clearly, the most evident element in the set of associations such pieces tried to work through was the threat of invasion. Although not explicitly stated, a distinct parallel was regularly implied between the Russian tanks and Hitler's Panzer divisions in World War II. In the week of the anniversary of the invasion of Hungary, and with the Polish situation still teetering, George-Brown could not resist going 'over the top' to suggest that the demonstrators of the day before would be directly responsible for any outbreak of war, as "those who protested the most" against war in the thirties had brought World War II about. What is significant here is not so much the excesses of particular variants of this argument, but its relation to popular understanding. In articles like George-Brown's a causal relationship is constructed between the security of a nation-state, the enemy's possession of the means of destruction and the necessity to avoid capitulation to so ominous a force.

What needs to be noted here is that this causal chain was mobilised throughout the popular press, and that, in our opinion, this version of the deterrant strategy connects powerfully with everyday feelings and experiences. The structure of the deterrence argument has its own commonsense force. Here is Lord George-Brown again:

There is only one way to prevent a war. That is to make it abundantly clear that it can't be won. When that is clear no-one is likely to light the fuse. But it has to be incontestably evident that that is so. And at every level at which we might be tested. ... we will have to make it clear that we will use whatever minimum force of any kind is required to contain aggression.

(The Sunday Express, op. cit.)

The corollary of such logic is thus unrelenting opposition to disarmament 'in the face of the enemy', as it were. Precisely the same forms of popular association used to justify deterrence can be made to ridicule disarmament, especially unilateral, which is extraordinarily vulnerable at just this point - where the 'moral force' of the kind advocated by Humphreys in the Bronowski lecture meets the pragmatism of day-to-day reality. Witness the Daily Express's tirade against "CND's peculiar form of appeasement":

There is nothing wrong, indeed everything right, with campaigning for nuclear disarmament - MULTILATERAL nuclear disarmament. What is sheer madness is to argue, as the CND does, that the West should on its own and without any negotiation with the Soviets, dispose of all our nuclear weapons.

(26.10.81, p.8)

This again is a form of argument recognisable to every trade-unionist: never let the bastards have something for nothing.

'CND - Campaign for National Defencelessness' - Toilet Graffiti

The above recovery of the notion of disarmament to the deterrence strategy signals again the recurrent theme that cuts across the arguments of both the qualities and populars - the inevitable obviousness of deterrence as an international foreign policy strategy of a quite overarching kind. In this way all roads must lead to the deployment of U.S. missiles in European seas and lands. Multilateral disarmament becomes not a mode of disarmament but a precondition to the 'sensible' course of 'negotiating from strength', in contrast to the unilateral 'abandonment' of nuclear weapons.

It would seem that Raymond Williams is right, then, when he argues that the breaking of the deterrence/multilateralism couplet is a prerequisite of any intervention in this field of public debate and popular understanding ('The Politics of Nuclear Disarmament', New Left Review 124). The role of this couplet as the would-be guarantee of national defence sets up the 'enemy within' trap, i.e. the vulnerability of CND to accusations of Russian/Communist allegiance. Some suggestions for breaking the logic that joins these associations will be provided in the conclusion. But we might note here that the whole deterrence argument rests on the unargued assumption that Britain's place in the world is, primarily, as the most loyal ally of The United States of America, a bastion, morally if not militarily, of 'the Western Alliance'.

One implication of CND's stance, and also of END's, is to challenge the making natural in this way of the whole post-war, cold-war international settlement.

3. REPRESENTATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

As an organization committed to democratic protest as a means to change, CND of necessity operates on a pre-existing terrain. This terrain is already occupied by such concepts as democratic freedom, rights of demonstration, public opinion and citizenship, contested by powerful interest groups with which CND is forced to contend. CND itself is a kind of test of whether such claims about the freedom of Western democracy are true. The media play an important role in constructing these categories in a popular day-to-day manner. It is essential therefore for CND to win the struggle for meaning within at least some sections of the news media. If, for example, CND has to battle with a very narrowly construed notion of democracy, then the very legitimacy of protest itself is called into question. In this way, CND becomes an agent within the diverse forces that define the meanings of freedom, democracy, parliamentary government, the right to protest, the rule of law, etc. To redefine these, CND needs not only to mobilise mass support but to ensure that it is seen undeniably to have done so.

Meanings of the October Demonstration

What follows is an analysis of some of the media meanings assigned to the demonstration within the framework of these categories.

i) Western Democratic Rights v. the Totalitarian System of Communism and the threat by terrorists

As indicated in the previous section, the democratic Western societies are implicitly counterposed to representations of alien forces that constantly threaten to invade them (Russia) or undermine them (Communism, terrorism). The BBC World Service put out a five-minute talk called Commentary, by Maurice Latcy. This based its argument on the contention that since democratic governments permit demonstrations, CND's effect is essentially one-sided. "While the campaign (is a) valuable expression of public abhorrence" it is also a "dangerous political instrument" promoting the dangers of war (transmission: 24/25.10.81, 13.09, 16.09, 23.09, GMT). Thus the BBC World Service again (World News, 24/25.10.81, transmissions: 16.00, 17.00, 22.00, 23.00, 00.00, 02.00, 03.00, 06.00, 07.00, 08.00, 09.00, 11.00, GMT) featured the American Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Walter Strosser:

Anti-nuclear demonstrations have to be taken seriously, an expression of concern although the Soviet Union exploited them.

The Daily Telegraph in its editorial (26.10.81, p.16) and Julian Critchley's article, 'Nato is THE peace Movement' (op. cit.) draws on this pattern of meaning: through the space allowed to CND and its peace demonstrations the West will, if it is not careful, allow Russia to turn the whole of Europe into a vast Gulag.

The strategy inherent in this way of presenting the world is to heighten the ideological oppositions between the East and the West, thus legitimating military preparations as solely defensive moves against an inimicably hostile enemy.

Charges that CND was somehow being used by Russia, the Communists or international terrorists were frequently made. Sometimes it was implied that CND is actually in alliance with them, or sometimes the suggestion was created, in a possibly unintentional fashion, through the juxtaposition of news items. Thus a BBC Radio 2 newscast (24.10.81, 22.00) carried the item that the FBI had uncovered an organised left-wing conspiracy to undermine U.S. society. Similarly, The Sun (26.10.81, p. 6) carried to the right of Jon Akass' column about nuclear weapons an editorial with the headline 'Funds for Terror':

The FBI ... report that many extreme Left-wing groupings are covering up for terrorist organisations. Their aim is to smash society as we know it today so that the Reds can march into the disaster area.

This guilt by proximity can have as powerful effects as directly 'substantiated' news items. In Radio London news broadcasts (25.10.81, transmission: 8.00, 9.00, 10.00, 13.00) these items were also similarly linked.

The 'External threat', headlined 'Warning on Soviet Menace' (Daily Mail, 23.10.81, p.4) was another kind of reserve concept that could be called upon and brought into play as needed. It was used by Winston Churchill MP (News About Britain, BBC World Service, 24/25.10.81, transmission: 00.09, 03.09, 07.09, 11.09 GMT):

Millions of people who support unilateral disarmament are being conned into taking the path most likely to lead to war... countries which weaken in the face of aggressive totalitarian powers positively invite attack.

The appeal to machismo is also very plain in this passage.

There were also recurrent references to direct Russian influence. A BBC Radio 2 news bulletin stated:

An American State Department Official has told a disarmament conference in Paris that the US was worried about the

increasing tendency in the West to give the Soviets the benefit of the doubt while remaining suspicious about American initiatives. Lawrence Eagleburger said the Russians were waging a propaganda campaign to encourage this. (24.10.81, transmission: 20.00)

This emphasis on Russian propaganda must be compared with the next news bulletin which said:

...the extent of the protests showed that the US was failing to persuade many people in Europe that its analysis of the Soviet threat was correct.

The Daily Telegraph's editorial carried the same message:

It is obvious that Russia has played a large part in inspiring and orchestrating the various manifestations of the Peace' movement. Opinions differ as to how much is spontaneous and how much is the result of the machination of the long-established network of Communist parties, cover organisations, trade union activists, infiltrators and so on. 26.10.81, p.16)

There were also more sinister allegations that CND is somehow strangely awash with funds (from Russia or its friends,). For example, in a long factual report, The Sunday Telegraph alleged suddenly that all these demonstrators travelled free, and that CND provided all publicity funds (25.10.81, p.1)

ii) Citizenship: The Volatile Peace Crowd Having Emotional Spasms
v. The Mature and Considered View of the British Public

The opposed couplet of this heading is taken from Paul Johnson's article in the Daily Mail (26.10.81, p.6). In order to maintain their positive version of Western democracy, a bastion against the totalitarian Eastern bloc, certain entrenched interest groups need to support the theoretical right of citizens to peaceful protest. Simultaneously, they seek to deny such protests the right to serious consideration. Also, the news media represent themselves as a part of this bastion of Western democracy, affirming their right and duty to 'publish and be damned'. Since the ideological construction of 'free speech' embraces both the freedom of the press and the right to protest, the problem of reporting demonstrations poses particular contradictions for the Conservative media. Their way round the problem is to marginalise the demonstrators, by contrasting them with the ideal, passive, law-abiding citizens who stays at home. Paul Johnson's all-out attack on CND supporters (op.cit.) is a striking example of this, while The Guardian's coverage (26.10.81) pp.1 & 3), focussing on the quaintness of the occasion, conveys the same message in a less easily challenged way. Such constructions are markedly different from those provided by the media on the occasion of the Royal Wedding, when those out on the streets were represented as 'us', 'the nation'.

Similarly, the military/defence bloc and their apologists equally need to appear to uphold democratic rights. They see the media as a means of persuading the public that the military exists to defend such democratic rights. At the same time the real, normal, average citizen is separated out from these strange people who take to the streets.

This contradiction also came out clearly in the Radio 1 programme, Talkabout (27.10.81), in which a Conservative MP, Anthony Buck, and Paul Weller of The Jam took part. It is clear that the MP ideologically needed to uphold the right to demonstrate, at least in theory, so as to present his view of the totalitarian nature of the USSR. On the other hand, he wished to dismiss out of hand those who do so exercise their democratic rights. Throughout the programme Buck repeats 'We couldn't have a meeting like this in Russia'.

Buck: I don't want to see us taken into a regime where we can't have meetings like this.

Again, in response to a question about what effect the march might have:

Buck: I think what it will do is perhaps show up the fact that we can have marches like that and you can't on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

yet:

Buck: We have government by people voting not by people demonstrating, and that's the way, and a healthy way in my view. Government through the ballot box and not through demos.

Young woman: Surely, if we're a democratic society, we have a right to change our government's policy?

Buck: Absolutely. By the ballot box.

iii) The Police and Law and Order

Closely allied to the threat of terrorism and the use of such a threat to justify curtailment of civil liberties is the idea of the police. They represent the most solid, respectable, kindly face of law and order within a liberal democracy. The image of the British bobby is still used as a trump card. Thus the Daily Express (24.10.81, p.2) carried a story headed: 'Red Alert for IRA Bombers'. The last paragraph read:

Sir David McNee's hunt for the 6 or 7 strong team of bombers will be made harder this week-end when 100,000 demonstrators...

So the CND demonstration took on yet another meaning as a problem for our long-suffering police. The police were also used fairly consistently as an authoritative source of information, especially in the wide-spread use of their estimate of numbers, so that the event was mediated through police opinion. This powerful police presence, representing the respectable and responsible elements of society, once again implies the irresponsible, fringe quality of mass demonstrations. Without the protection of our

hard-pressed police-force, society would plunge into indescribable anarchy. '150,000 Marchers Bring Chaos to London' was the headline in the Sunday Express (25.10.81, p.1), which emphasised this peril by linking its reportage to police worries about IRA bombs. Similarly, The Observer (25.10.81, p.1) carried the main headline 'Peace March Jams London'. In such ways the meaning of the October demonstration is changed from its nature as a protest about nuclear weapons to a threat to law and order, an inconvenience, a burden to the police. The very peacefulness of the march did not allow the Press to have its usual field-day of showing injured policemen in order to delegitimize the protest, although it did try as far as possible to fit the demonstrators into its stereotypes of social deviants and trouble-makers (eg. 'Ban-Bomb' Foot Defies the Mob', headline in the Sunday People, 25.10.81, p.2).

Telling It Like It Is

The problem CND has in channelling its arguments through the existing news media is exemplified by the way in which Harriet Harman's speech from the platform was wholly lost in reports of the event. This was possible not only because she is a woman and seemingly deemed unnewsworthy, but also because she shifted the very grounds for debate onto new terrain - the threat of 'the nuclear state' to our 'hard-won democratic rights'. As she pointed out, the democracy/freedom argument is most often mobilised by the pro-nuclear faction. It is used both to display the unique character of Western democracy's vulnerability, as opposed to the untroubled totalitarianism of the Eastern bloc; and also to berate the wilfulness of demonstrators in undervaluing it. It is not an area that the opposition wishes to see claimed by CND. However, the arguments advanced by Harman and the NICOL very much need to be promoted in order for CND to win this strategic territory. It is an area where CND might expect to be able to recruit support from within sections of the news media, since notions of a 'free' society are so closely bound up with those of a 'free' press. The operation of the Official Secrets Act, the lack of a Freedom of Information Act, the growth of surveillance are all areas in which CND has a serious stake and which are part of the debate about what a Nuclear Military State must be like.

Once again the young people in the Radio 1 debate focused on the issue of a free press and what it means. The response they drew from Love as representative of the media is interesting in more ways than one:

Steven: That march will change the views of some people because only when a quarter of a million get together can Tony Benn and people like him get their views put on to the television, even when they're corrupted, because what's put on the television and the 9 O'clock news was a corrupted view of what he said, but nevertheless, then he gets a chance to

... speak, the people in this country get to know the other side of the coin, they don't just get the Government's Protect and Survive side of the ...

Love: Steven, can I ask you, how do you corrupt a recording?

Steven: You edit it.

Love: OK. Let me go on to another Tony ... (laughter) ... You are suggesting that selective media coverage corrupts what is said?

Steven: Of course, that's what the Russians do.

and, in another part of the discussion:

Young woman: During this weekend there's been a lot of CND rallies and that, but whenever they've been reported in the media of any kind they always seem to be trivialised, sort of second, and the first things they looked for were was there any trouble, was anybody arrested. They don't look at the politics of it, the CND.

Love: I'm sorry, I've got to argue with that, every paper led with the London Demonstration, every newspaper made the point that there was not one arrest, every newspaper queried the number of people ... (noisy interruption) ... It was front-page news throughout Britain. You can't say the media trivialised it ... (conflicting voices)

Young Woman: They didn't look at the fact that it was CND.

In the exchange with Steven, Love exhibits either a naivete about the effect of editing, or is showing a genuine belief that the News in some simple way just reports what is there to report. As Buck says elsewhere:

"You've got freedom, freedom of the press; we've got freedom like ... (lost in outcry)". In the second exchange, with the young woman, he seems quite unable to take on board the point she is making about the meanings assigned to the demonstration in the media and simply reiterates (inaccurately and misleadingly) that it was reported prominently in the press. This is a rare occasion when a media-man (sic) can actually be heard to express his views on media coverage and, it seems, betrays a rather lower level of understanding than his audience. Even in the obvious matter of censorship, Love's view seems naive. It is important to remember that the BBC refused to show The War Game, rejected E.P. Thompson for the Dingleby Lecture, and experienced some embarrassment over Humphrey's Bronowski Lecture.

These issues of civil liberties, of the democratic/totalitarian state axis, of the nature of citizenship, of the role of public opinion in a democratic society, all lead on to an area present only as a shadow in all the turns of the debate. It is, however, a crucial one in which CND is inevitably involved. It is both a site of struggle and a stake in the

argue more fully later the terms of this debate could become a major asset for CND.

The Limits of Parliamentary Democracy

If there are structuring principles in official British opinion, one must be about the unassailable superiority of the British parliamentary system. It is almost impossible to make any type of criticism of the merits of our present form of government without it being dismissed out of hand. Think of the fate of Peter Tatchell. CND has to reckon with the fact that its existence is a challenge to these sacrosanct assumptions. Although it partly exists within the approved framework of the system of parliamentary lobbying, as an organiser of extra-parliamentary activities, such as Peace Camps or mass demonstrations, CND is also outside the conventional structures of formal democracy and has its only power base in a mass movement of ordinary people. The unconditional excellence of the Houses of Parliament does still exist in popular thought as a potent element in British self-identity, but it co-exists, somewhat contradictorily, with obvious and widespread dissatisfaction with the system of formal politics in Britain today.

There are limits, and 'felt' limits too, on the efficacy of parliamentary democracy's responsiveness to those it claims to represent. This experience shows not only in the swings of public opinion during the periods between general elections, but also in the remoteness of many MPs' lifestyles from that of working people. The House of Commons is also predominantly male in its membership and highly masculinist in its operation, as the broadcasted brawls from within its hallowed halls suggests. Nevertheless, despite its lack of genuine representativeness, it is difficult in the extreme to criticise it. This particular aspect of the U.K.'s democratic institutions is embedded in a system of meanings that claim it as the very essence and bastion of freedom and democracy.

There is, however, another available system of concepts that can be brought into play against this formalised expression of democracy. These are a range of populist ideas about control, majorities, minorities, and who has rights to speak and decide. Once again, the Radio 1 debate provides three remarkable crystallisations of these positions. The first exchange started from the possible effects of the demonstration.

Love: Tony, do you think that the march will have any effect?

Buck: No, I think what will happen is perhaps to show up the fact that we can have marches like that and you can't on the other side of the Iron Curtain ... (jeering and calls)

Love: ... but do you think it'll have any effect in the UK?

Buck: The fact that there were a lot of people on the street will generate the sort of intelligent dispute and argument about it all. I think it may be helpful to that extent, but it's not gonna make any transformations of the scene ... no.

Weller: 'Cause the government's too oppressive.

Buck: Because, on the whole, we have government by the people voting, not by demonstrating, and that's the way, and the healthy way, in my view: government through the ballot box and not through demos.

Young Woman: Surely if we're a democratic society we have the right to change our government's policy ...

Buck: Absolutely. By the ballot box.

Young Woman: And you're ... well, we only have a ballot every five years, don't we, so what do we do in the meantime?

Buck: You have to sit it out, my dear, you have to sit it out.

Interjector(male): Sit on our backsides and let you ...

Buck: It's not very long between elections and ...
(uproar) ... so it's alright ... (more uproar) ...
at least we do have elections ...

Young Woman: But those marches ...

Buck: ... and other parts of the world don't

Young Woman: Those marches, yeah, there was loads of people there, and there were loads of people showing their views. You might say they're not gonna do anything but at least we're not sitting down and taking what people are shovin' in our faces, and we're going to make a stand, and we're going to show people what we're made of ...

Buck: That's your democratic right and thank goodness you're exercising it if you want to ...
(Weller and Buck try to talk each other down)

Weller: You lot are the minority.

What is interesting to us about these exchanges is the MP's evident vulnerability on 'democracy', witness the changes of tack through the debate. First he equates democracy with elections, but under pressure from his audience (whose consent he is clearly not winning) the right if not the wisdom of 'demonstration' is conceded. The patronising 'You have to sit it out, my dear', becomes 'That's your democratic right'. His assumption is that we have, unlike benighted nations in 'other parts of the world', a completed democratic process. But this hardly satisfies his audience or part of it. The issue itself reinforces the point: can we afford to wait for five years if the blunders of 'old men' may reduce us to shadows, before life has really begun?

In many ways what is at issue here is the crucial political question: Who is 'us'? In the following two extracts this question is posed to each side:

Young Woman: You've done a lot of talking tonight, and I'm not being rude but you have and you keep saying 'we' and 'us', but who exactly are 'we' and 'us'?

Buck : Nato.

Young Woman: A few politicians. Who's Nato? A few politicians. Reagan and Maggie and all the others, just a few politicians, not the people, not the people who get killed.

Buck: They elected us you see, and so ... (stutters) ... we're the elected representatives.

Young Woman: Through propaganda, basically.

and:

Weller: It's the same old situation, because we're ruled by a minority. We're the majority, you know, same as through the world.

Buck : Who's 'we', Paul, who's 'we'?

Weller: The people, you know, ordinary people, who walk the street, ride on buses, and we're controlled by minorities, of, you know, people who are past their prime.

Buck : You've got the vote...

Although essentially indefinable, the radical scorn and emotional authenticity in the young woman's voice clearly unsettled Buck, and the tone of his answer lacked his usual bluff, paternal authority. Such challenges to the insolence of office go hand-in-hand with its demystification, and the reinstatement of the hidden connections between the continuing arms race and those whose interests it serves. There is, implicit in Buck's attitudes in this discussion, the romantic myth of bitter suffering nobly born. It is a sort of updated white man's burden which, weighed down with the full knowledge of the horror of war, western politicians fearlessly shoulder to protect their helpless populations against 'the hard men of the Kremlin'. Concealed in this line of argument is the potential mutuality of interest + at the minimum in not having a nuclear war - between the majority of people in the East and in the West.

When MPs like Buck define 'we, the people' as Nato, a natural response is to question the claims of MPs to be the only legitimate representatives of the people. It also leads to a further chain of argument: where, in fact, does the real power lie? Is it just in Parliament and the elected government or in the forces and apparatuses of the State, especially the law, the police and the military? Does it not also lie in economic and financial institutions?

Certainly, the interests of multinational corporations are not easily controlled by nation states. The recent history of the IMF demonstrates its power over British governments. What would, or could, a government do, faced with decisive opposition from any or a combination or all of these power blocs? In such a case, even the landslide election of a government committed to nuclear disarmament might be only the beginning of the struggle, and not its successful conclusion. CND's promise, then, is not to destroy but to deepen democratic traditions, making them more than merely formal. There is a very sharp sense of this possibility, as a popular demand, in these particular exchanges.

PART III: SUBTERRANEAN THEMES

GENDER, YOUTH, CLASS, RACE

1. Gender

Besides the explicit issues at stake in the debate about nuclear weapons it should also be recognised that there are subterranean themes, not necessarily acknowledged in a conscious way, that also make up a ground where arguments can be lost or won. These hidden structures often organise our ways of thinking, and, although not the same for all groups in society, are widespread and powerful determinants on our thought. One of the chief sets of assumptions relates to definitions of gender, the subliminal beliefs and feelings we have about what it is to be female or male. A brief look at the reporting of the October demonstration reveals that women are remarkable in it by their almost complete absence, despite their obvious physical presence as marchers and as speakers on the platform. Only The Sunday Times (25.10.81, p.1) in its reasonably extensive coverage mentioned Petra Kelly, and she was the only female platform speaker mentioned in the whole of the media coverage. Women, it would appear, for those who make it, are not news. This suggests that CND has to negotiate a crucial level of meaning in media representations that operates powerfully, but in some sense secretly, defining what counts as important/newsworthy in a given context. Its operation can often only be traced by the absences, silences and burials it perpetrates.

Women and News

The media in all their forms are part of the terrain where these gender roles/stereotypes are created and maintained. It is still largely felt to be true that the public world of politics, economics and serious world affairs belongs to men, and the private world of home, children and gentle feelings belongs to women. Women and their activities are therefore not newsworthy. This pre-definition of news values not only excludes women, but legitimates male activity as authoritative, reasonable, normal, human. Even in the Left weeklies which we looked at, feminist publications apart, and except for the coverage in Big Flame, women were absent. Nor should it be underestimated how comfortable people find it to operate within the limits of the roles assigned to them and how uncomfortable and unnatural it feels to move outside them -even when they are felt to be restrictive or arbitrary.

The news media are, of course, still produced and controlled mainly by men. It is easy for men to be unconscious of their masculine identity, and to feel themselves to be representative of humanity in general, with ungendered people the norm. It might be helpful for CND to be clear in its press releases on which occasions it is trying to organise its arguments in accordance with

masculine/feminine stereotypes and when it is trying to challenge the underlying gender structure itself.

Mobilising or Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Reportage

Although the strength of these stereotypes cannot be doubted, the public-private split does not necessarily work to the benefit of one side of the debate or the other. The use to which such gender-specific values can be put is an area for constant struggle. The Daily Mail (24.10.81, p.19 (TV Page)) carried a story mobilising the 'natural' opposition of women to aggression and violence not in favour of the Peace March, but against it.

It gave an account of an anonymous young mother visiting CND's headquarters and put off by the 'hate-pictures' of Thatcher and Carrington. Thus the praiseworthy female aversion to 'virulent hatred' can be readily admitted and, as in this case, activated against CND. (The headline was 'Those Frightening Warriors of Peace'.) This apparent concession to arguments against militarism can be made because, in gender stereotype terms, it is also women's traditional caring role that excludes them from serious public affairs, and so allows the conclusion to be drawn that any solutions offered by women are likely to be naive, muddle-headed, innocently misconceived. It can be conceded that women, perhaps rightly, see war as evil, but this admission can be recuperated by activating the more powerful stereotype of men's superior grasp of political reality, what Paul Johnson (Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.6) would call "the mature and considered view of the British public", which, it goes without saying, is hard to conceive of as anything else but male.

In other words, these ubiquitous, culturally acquired and constructed beliefs about masculinity and femininity can be mobilised both for and against a position/argument. Awareness of these possibilities gives some ground for manoeuvre to CND. Firstly, there is the potential for change; as these stereotypes acquire meaning only through use, changing the use (eg. feminising strength, masculinising empathy) can also change the meaning. Secondly, it should be possible to safeguard against a hostile reporter setting CND events/arguments within a framework that mobilises feelings of normality and self-identity against CND.

Gender and Language

Language is itself another site where gender roles are constructed. It can be useful to think of language not as a system that somehow reflects or names reality-out-there, but rather as a means through which human beings create their consciousness of reality. Language also gives us spaces

or positions to occupy when we use it, both as speakers and listeners, encoders and decoders of meaning, 'a place for "me" and "you" within the world it signifies' (Donald: OU Popular Culture, p.54). As the English language is presently used, men and women cannot comfortably occupy the same speaker/hearer positions. It may be worthwhile to look more closely at how language defines these positions of masculinity and femininity, so close and familiar to us as to seem wholly natural. It is because gender identity is so intimately a part of self-identity that it can activate such powerful emotions. Such feelings are so deep that we often experience them as instinctive, and their activation either strongly enhances and legitimates a position, or alternatively makes it seem unnatural, abnormal and unacceptable.

One of the crucial ambiguities within English is the ambivalence of terms that apparently apply just to people, neutrally, that are not gender-specific. However, if we consider a few examples we can see that although such words do often apply equally to both male and female persons, they also sometimes implicitly exclude all females, but never exclude all males.

- A. If he (the toiler) survives, we shall save and rebuild everything (Lenin).
- B. We owe a duty to the people of this country to beware of apparently simple solutions.
- C. Normal people don't go around raping women.

Sentence C definitely excludes women, sentence B probably includes them, and sentence A is curiously ambiguous. It is this slide between genuinely universal terms, including both male and female persons, and the other uses which tacitly exclude females that causes problems. We would follow Coward and Black (Screen Education, No. 39, 1981) in seeing the crucial effect to be the way in which men can lay claim to this non-gendered identity. Women can never be sure that such neutral terms do in fact apply to them, whereas men need never encounter such a hesitation. This enables them to represent as human nature what is in fact a socially created version of masculinity: aggressive, hierarchic and territorial. It is hard to think of females as ungendered people in this way; they remain the sex which is unrepresentative of humanity in general. It also allows for the marginalisation of women's traditional nurturing role, removing it from its centrality in any definition of 'human nature'.

This common-sense notion that 'human' nature is inevitably violent and nasty is often mobilised in favour of the argument that peace moves and disarmament are doomed to failure. It can be challenged by disclosing the ways in which it is constructed and promulgated through language and meanings chosen and

disseminated by the news media. The Daily Telegraph (24.10.81, p.6) carried a substantial article about Conservative reactions to the Peace Demonstration. One of the MPs, Edwardes, made use of this common-sense ideology of human nature by accusing CND of "dodging the realities of human nature, human history and the fact that nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented". A cursory acquaintance with world history would seem to provide ample grounds for this pessimism. There is, however, also with historical warrant, a view of humanity that is more hopeful and open. For example, recognising the nurturing role traditionally ascribed to women focuses more sharply the view that human beings are far more co-operative and caring than is suggested by the prevalent common-sense notion of human nature, which has been constructed by a competitive and hierarchical society.

Appealing to Women through the Media

Thus, one path to the goal of changing beliefs about human nature is to give greater respect to women's experience. However, as is clear from the general exclusion of women from the news media's account of the October Demonstration, it is not necessarily an easy task either to reach women through these channels or to persuade the media to represent seriously women's activities in the peace field. There are other aspects of the female stereotype that makes it particularly difficult for the popular press and TV to accept women as self-organised and self-organising and it may be hard to challenge the stereotype of the essentially domestic, light-weight female role. The few sparse references to women on the march identified them in their most harmless roles as nuns or young mothers. The only women specifically mentioned were in the News of the World's brief report (25.10.81), which named Billie Whitelaw and Susannah York as being among the Showbiz personalities, although the piece itself was inconspicuously placed on page two.

Despite some sympathetic coverage in magazines directed exclusively at women (eg. the Women's Peace Camp coverage in Honey, Jan. 1982, p.40), or even friendly comments heard on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour (29.10.81), it is the daily press, the weeklies and TV and Radio news and current affairs programmes that are seen as the expression of serious public opinion. Nevertheless, it may be possible to challenge this array of masculinist assumptions through the positive mobilisation of women's counter common-sense notions. We feel there remains to be tapped a reservoir of female (not necessarily feminist) common-sense beliefs, perhaps best summed-up in the slogan 'No More Toys for the Boys'. This slightly condescending view of male activity is reinforced by an unsystematised set of beliefs to the effect that human nature is as much nurturing as destructive, that the quality of

daily, personal life is what legitimates politics, and that empathy and insight produce knowledge as surely as politicians' realism and experts' expensive research. It will, however, require very extensive changes in the representations of the defence/diplomacy debates to make any inroads against their predominantly masculinist assumptions. The machismo ring to newspaper headlines is only one indicator of the hidden value-systems that structure the world of politics and in which the news media as purveyors of Public Opinion play an important part, eg. 'Bomb Marchers Given a Blasting' (The Sun, 26.10.81, p.2) and 'Ban-Bomb Foot Defies the Mob' (Sunday People, 25.10.81, p.2). The metaphors of impotence used by the Establishment to express their fears about disarmament are equally revealing. There is, for example, Butcher in The Daily Telegraph (24.10.81, p.6) with "the softening up of public opinion", and "the decay of public will ...", and Critchley, also in The Daily Telegraph (26.10.81, p.16), with the phrase "a eunuch in the harem of Europe". Such details may seem trivial but, if we accept the argument that language is an effective shaper of subjects, that it offers us as men and women different roles through which we come to experience ourselves as an identity, then it is such details that constantly and unnoticeably guide and control the ways in which we experience reality. If CND's objective is to ensure nuclear disarmament, then it is engaged in a struggle to change reality in more than one simple way.

2. Youth: the Generation Game

In our analysis of the media coverage surrounding the demonstration the theme of youth appeared as one of the major focal points - ever present, though employed in very different ways.

In this section we shall attempt to outline the great preoccupation with one section of the community, and to indicate how one category can initiate different forms of reportage and response.

Just after 11.20 on Saturday morning the new wave of nuclear disarmers won their first victory over the old generation ...

(The Guardian, 26.10.81, p.3)

The above quotation is an indicator of a general theme running throughout many reports: that of a differentiation not only of the many groups on the march, but more particularly of young from old. Using theories from past research of the media treatment of youth sub-cultures and deviancy⁹, we shall show the varying imagery of this binary opposition and how it can be used to further a particular point of view.

Such images of youth can be divided roughly into a positive mode and a negative mode for the purpose of this report.



In the post-war period youth has been seen as a vanguard of social change: the bearers of a new 'Golden Age' of optimism, with the future in their hands. It is an age of transition from childhood to adulthood, a time of exploration, experimentation, questioning and searching. Changes in behaviour and beliefs are common, if not necessary, in the growing adolescent, and the wide variety of sub-cultural groupings bears witness to this.

As CND is a movement concerned precisely with the future, youth becomes a vitally important section of the community to influence and involve. The recognition of youth as one of CND's 'new' areas of support is borne out by the great care the movement itself took in publicising the wish for a 'festival atmosphere': the music, the theatre groups, the colourful displays to attract young people in large numbers. In this respect they can be judged to have succeeded.

It was a day for all ages, races and creeds, a day for trade unionists, Christians, Communists and Labour Party supporters. It was a day above all for the young who were present in huge numbers ...

(Morning Star, 26.10.81, p.1)

That young people were not also members of the other groups mentioned above is debatable (a question which will be discussed in more detail later), yet they were present in sufficient quantity to merit being singled out as a group in their own right. It is their future, and they made it their day.

However, the fact that a large proportion of the crowd, in excess of 250,000, was under the age of 25 is indeed something to be optimistic about. It signals an increase not only in awareness, but also in the willingness to participate - to act for themselves and not to leave the decisions affecting the future of society to the older generation. Another aspect of the demonstration which enhanced its positive view was its peacefulness. As with many other recent demonstrations and protests, there was no violence or trouble of any kind which might lend itself to distortion or over-exaggeration. Even though many of the reports went to great lengths to give examples of the punks, anarchists and other potential 'troublemakers', they failed to find the disruption and violence they sought. The Peace Movement en masse marched peacefully.

In fact the peacefulness of the march was stressed, but it is at this point where differences in usage and 'intended' readings can be indicated. The fact that a youthful demonstration could also be a peaceful one seemed to be tinged with relief, but also with a certain amount of surprise.

Sometimes the statement was followed up by remarks on the number of police needed (by implication to prevent any disturbance) rather than to question if such a number was really necessary in the first place. Even the 'quality' newspapers seemed to feel the need to cite the most radical act, committed by a marcher, that they could find:

A boy with purple hair trotted up to the Police Control van and asked for two choc ices ...

(The Guardian, 26.10.81, p.3)

However, another important aspect of the focus on youth is its use to marginalise the event. By emphasising the number of young people on the march, any other groupings and people of an older generation are, by implication, separated and distanced. The polarities of Young/Old are reworked through similar oppositions - Trivial/Serious, Immature/Mature, Idealistic/Rational, Fun/Politics.

The CHD orators rant ... the young have a great day out.

(Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.6)

The flow of feminist poets and alternative comics on stage gave way to heavyweight speakers ...

(The Guardian, 26.10.81, p.3)

Fenner Brockway, aged 93 ... left the stage arm in arm with Anajoy David, the young editor of CHD's youth newspaper. Both were shaking: he from age, she from nerves ...

(The Guardian, op. cit.)

Young Doves, Old Hawks

(Daily Mirror, 27.10.81, p.2)

A great deal of time appeared to be spent on creating a stereotypical image of youth. Despite the differences of the marchers, a CHD 'type' was constructed out of all the aspects of clothing, speech and activity that definitely signalled that they were 'them' and not one of 'us'.

Until then (the October demonstration) ... the biggest demonstration in London's history had been dominated by a small group of characters from Posh cartoons wearing green anoraks, sensible shoes huddled around thermos flasks and talking about Solidarnosc and "What I mean by Socialism" ...

(The Guardian, 26.10.81, p.6)

The image of the middle-class student became supplanted by a preoccupation with the spectacle. The 'typical' protester wore a special outfit for the occasion, painted his or her face (the news bulletins on BBC and ITV seemed particularly attracted to this novelty), sported brightly coloured hairstyles, sang and chanted. The 'type' lay somewhere between the clown and the punk/anarchist.

The immaturity of the marchers was signalled by the use of patronising, paternalistic rhetoric. The passage from the Radio 1 Talkabout programme quoted earlier serves to illustrate this point. Similarly, the press pursued the theme of naivety, as for example, The Daily Telegraph in its headline 'Nuclear Disarmers Dodge Realities' (24.10.81, p.6). Not only were the demonstrators living in a fantasy, but they were a potential threat - as public opinion would be softened up by the 'misled idealism of our young'.

The statements made by D. Hurd (Foreign Affairs Minister) were a particular favourite of the tabloids, especially The Sun. They reiterated the common-sense argument that you do not need a demonstration to show people are worried about nuclear war - no one wants a war - and that such demonstrations will make it less likely that negotiations will take place. The Sun made the status of the protesters quite clear in its headline 'Don't Marchers Given a Blasting: They Aid Reds says Minister' (26.10.81, p.8).

However, this notion of 'Reds' not only under the bed but actually on the march was an extreme one. Rather than see the call for disarmament as a continued campaign it was more useful to see it as an emotional (youthful) outburst.

Peace crowds are particularly volatile. There comes a time, once in a generation or so, when the longing for peace and the fear of war becomes so great that the arguments are brushed aside and a lot of normally sensible folk give way to what Aneurin Bevan called 'an emotional spasm'. Like other spasms it does not last ...

(Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.6)

Young and old had not joined together to demonstrate on one particular very important political issue; instead, the 'normal' (old) people had been carried along by a tide of irrationality. Such a movement is a 'flash in the pan' and does not last (ie. exert a long-term intensive political influence). It can usefully be ignored: a 'spasm' can be tolerated and contained.

From these observations the media's reaction can be seen to fall into two categories: marginalisation and trivialisation, and the 'moral panic'. As in the treatment of deviancy, the activity of the marchers is outside the 'norm'. It is a challenge to the status quo (the policy of increasing defence), even if it is conducted within the 'legitimised' arena of resistance - the organised demonstration.

Youth sub-cultures have recently been defined as:

Movements which disturb a society's normative contours ... (and) mark the inception of troubling times - especially for those sections of the population who have made an overwhelming commitment to the continuation of the status quo. 'Troubling Times', when social anxiety is widespread but fails to find an organised public or political expression, give rise to the displacement of social anxiety onto a convenient scapegoat ...

(Hall and Jefferson, p. 71)

Certainly those sections of the community committed to the increase of militarism are facing a challenge, but although it is coming from 'organised, public expression' the situation is not allowed to rest there. The 'organised expression' (CND) itself becomes the recipient of displaced social anxiety - because of its 'youthfulness' it becomes a very convenient scapegoat.

This reaction to the growing support for the anti-nuclear movement could equally fit Cohen's definition of a 'moral panic':

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to be defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnosis and solutions.

(Cohen, p. 9)

Certainly, very stylised images of the marchers were given. The diversity of the groups was stated in print, but the visual images were overwhelmingly those of the young. The pictures chosen were those depicting 'youthful' activity. The most flamboyant outfits were chosen, the most colourful banners, and the best examples of chanting were found (notably on the BBC news bulletins the anarchist heckling was increased during the shot of Foot's speech - the action of a very small minority was taken as typical).

The moral barricades were manned (sic) by the 'experts', pronouncing their verdicts on the march and the possible consequences (such as even starting a war!). Equal opportunity was not given to spokespersons from the organisers or the marchers themselves.

At the best the older generation was seen as misled - carried away by an infantile euphoria; at worst they were seen as opportunists, manipulating the young for their own aims:

150,000 gathered in Hyde Park will do little harm...provided the responsible politicians remain cool and leave it to the mob to get excited... But when such gatherings happen in many European cities the politicians begin to think in terms of votes and start thinking about the 'spirit of the age'.

(Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.6)

There is no absolute way of guaranteeing any one 'preferred' reading: as one example shows, a painted face can be an indicator of enthusiasm and festivity, or used to indicate the trivial show of it all. Yet it would perhaps be more helpful if CND itself was not so divisive in its use of categorisations. Youth is helpful as an indicator of the movement's growing support, of it being a continuum and not a motley band of 'old faithfuls'. Yet too much emphasis on youth as an undifferentiated mass can aid representations of the event as marginal and therefore unimportant, while also undermining one of the great strengths of CND - its ability to unite all ages. Young people do not exist in a vacuum - they are members of sub-cultures, political organisations, different religions, trade unions, the unemployed, ethnic minorities etc. - they are part of society on many levels. In being so, they are also struggling on different levels. Their struggle for the future - their future - cannot be complete solely with the banning of nuclear weapons. It is a particular kind of future which is required and which must be fought for.

While we have concentrated primarily on the media reports of the demonstration itself, it is not sufficient in this case to limit the investigation to such a short time span. There are other informative and influential sources which operate before and after the demonstration which have a significant bearing on attitudes and reactions. What follows is, in many respects, a diversion, but an important one if we are to view youth not as a single undifferentiated category (divorced from the whole process of socialisation into male and female categories of 'behaviour' and 'interests'), and to see how the adoption of certain musical forms can aid or hinder the popularity of CND. Music is, however, only one of the media specifically directed at youth. This section of the report concludes, therefore, with a short note on comics and magazines.

Music - the Anti-Nuclear Industry

I'm the man in grey
I'm just the man at C & A
And I don't have a say
In the war games that they play.

(Man at C&A, The Specials,
Two Tone, 1980)

Amid the tumultuous onslaught voices ring out desperately warning of an imminent nuclear attack: the war games have started again. So has the music. The past few years have witnessed the re-emergence of the subject of nuclear war into the 'popular' music circuit. Many groups and individual musicians have protested their way, if not into the charts, then certainly into public recognition. On this demonstration, and at previous events, music was a major attraction - the more popular the band, the larger the expected audience. As with the speakers, a 'big name' is a crowd puller. On the October Rally special areas were designated for music - a stage was erected on the Embankment, where live music entertained the assembled crowd before the march began, and singers were allowed to perform (though without amplification) on the main platform in Hyde Park before the speeches.

The CND press releases of 21.9.81 (in particular those referring to student organisations) reaffirmed the organisers' wish for:

... a Rally and People's Festival, starting at 12 noon. From then on until the speeches begin around 3.30 p.m. is Festival Time - a time for music of all kinds, for steel, folk and jazz groups ... community singing and the lot...

That prediction certainly came true. All along the march there was a great variety of musical acts, bands, religious hymn singing and slogan chanting. The music was something the crowd could enthusiastically join in, creating an overwhelming sense of unity, of belonging to a whole movement, or merely stand back and enjoy. As the children of Aldermaston marched to the protest songs of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, so the London marchers stepped out to the music of the '80s. While the organisers of the '60s and the '80s

claimed a festival atmosphere, there remain marked differences in music and activity.

Although teenagers made up by no means the bulk of the marchers, as the square press consistently claimed they did, they nevertheless made each march into a carnival of optimism. ... beatniks ... appeared from nowhere in their grime and tatters with their slogan daubed crazy hats and streaming filthy hair, hammering their banjos, strumming aggressively on their guitars, blowing their antiquated cornets and sousaphones ... Protest was associated with festivity. There was a few feeling of licence granted by the obvious humanitarian attitude of the ravers themselves.

(Nuttall, p.47)

The 'crazy antics and the 'folk optimism' of We Shall Overcome and The Times They are A-Changin' changed with the passage of time. When the times did not change and the threat of nuclear war was not overcome, the feelings expressed became those of confusion, frustration at the powerlessness, disillusionment and a growing resentment at the situation people found themselves in.

Go Nuclear the Cowboy told me
And who am I to disagree ...

(The Lunatics Have Taken Over the Asylum,
The Fun Boy Three, Chrysalis, 1981)

The Lyrics of this song link quite interestingly with an article appearing in The Sun, in which Jon Akass argues that even in the 'old days' CND lacked plausible villains.

Nobody in their right minds wanted to drop the bomb,
and so it was necessary to invent a view of the world
ruled by (malevolent)lunatics.

(26.10.81, p.6)

But if the lunatics were in control of the world, then that world was an asylum. Only the insane would allow such a situation to continue; only lunatics would make preparations for the end of that world. The use of the 'cowboy' metaphor is only too clear - the Hollywood hero is acting again in the most important role of his life. Acting is one of the most important roles in the history of the world. The caricature of the 'trigger-happy' cowboy accounts greatly for the revival of the movement.

However, the change in the expression of feelings mentioned above did not signal pessimism instead of optimism. The growing resentment of the situation is being channelled into a wish to say 'No', not into apathy.

They never asked us if we want a war
Who do they think they're talking for,
Cos we never get no say,
They have to do it all their way.

Oh, we want no more of that,
You can't push us under the mat.
Oh, we want no more of that ...

(No More of That, Stiff Little Fingers,
Chrysalis, 1981)

Yet we would not like to suggest that the gap between the two decades was as wide as it might seem. Obviously certain 'anthems' are perennial as rallying calls. Some of the strongest examples of this are from the works of John Lennon. His untimely death in 1980 (ironically) aided the Peace Movement and brought to the fore many of the feelings expressed by anti-nuclear supporters. His songs were played relentlessly on the more popular radio stations, Imagine and Give Peace a Chance were re-released in the hope of 'cashing-in' on the wave of publicity surrounding the death of one who was being hailed as almost a saint. It is this uneasy relationship between the musicians themselves and the whole process of record production, distribution and broadcasting that has been a focus in many studies of the music industry. The music business, like any other, is primarily an industry governed by the motive of profit. In his book One for the Money Dave Harker details the history of the record industry and the implications of having ownership of not only production and distribution, but also many shares in the various leisure industries concentrated in very few hands. This concentration of ownership places a great deal of power in the record companies - in the decisions of what is produced, given 'air-time' and what is allowed to sell. It is argued that the need for profit leads to an over-concentration on 'successful' formulae, on tried and tested formats and singers, so stifling any radical change or creativity. A consensus in music is created - a 'safe' formula which allows the industry to function profitably with little in the way of challenge or criticism. Any pockets of resistance which appear can be effectively dealt with by the refusal of a recording contract or, where distribution outlets are controlled, by the refusal to play that particular record.

This policy can be seen as reasonably effective as most public knowledge of music will come from the radio, television, or the tracks played in the record shops themselves. Hence any 'ban' will curtail the number of people hearing the record and subsequently buying it, and favour the more available 'popular' offerings.

This description is obviously simplified a great deal, but serves to indicate a general tendency for 'alternative music' to become absorbed and 'naturalised' - a form of containment within the norm - or excluded from the legitimate circuit, left to struggle for survival and recognition. It is interesting how people tend to overlook or choose to ignore such 'tendencies':

Rock music is 'product', 'business' and so on. It is so obviously the case that we tend to forget. Our favourite musicians and singers are, of course immune to the debilitating effects of commerce. They can see through the exploitative system, even ridicule it in their work. There are, after all, some 'free' areas within the music industry. Or so we like to think ...we will do well to note how little freedom from the profit motive, from monopolising tendencies, and from cultural expropriation even the most radical-seeming institutions have won.

(Harker, p.105)

Hence music can only be a restricted form of resistance. Songs may be produced condemning nuclear war and the arms race, yet those critical musicians have no control on how the profits of their labours are spent:

We found out, and it wasn't for years that we did, that all the bread we made for Decca was going into making little black boxes that go into American Air Force bombers to bomb ... North Vietnam ... You find out you've helped kill God knows how many people without even knowing it.

(Keith Richard in Harker, p.105)

Nevertheless the great influence of music, especially on the lives of the young, cannot be ignored. Music can be, and is, used constructively in the formation of particular groupings and sub-cultures to:

... develop distinct patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life ... the way ... in which groups 'handle' the raw material of their social and material existence ...

(Hall and Jefferson, p.10)

Through the appropriation of a particular form of music or recording artist, and other cultural artifacts (such as clothing and literature), a new sense of personal and social identity can be expressed and experienced. Familiar forms can be reworked by the group and imbued with another meaning, a symbol, a secondary level of signification. All these forms of expression and activity are still part of the mainstream culture, yet can be used to subvert those dominant codes and beliefs.

In such a process music plays a fundamental role.

In one sense ... pop music is essentially part of the mainstream society, for capitalist ethics control the record industry as much as any other. But the ideas expressed through pop songs may be potentially and actually subversive of the established order, and there can be little doubt that it is in pop music, rather than in political or religious literature, that the values of the emerging youth culture are expressed.

(Leech, p.6)

Not only is there a challenge existing within the established framework. The past few years have witnessed the growth of more commercial local radio stations, and the re-emergence of 'private' radio. More independent record labels are being formed, some by individual groups themselves, such as 'Two-Tone,' or in the form of a locally based press. Not only does this constitute a challenge to the existing large companies, but a breaking of their monopoly. Similarly with distribution. More cheaply produced alternative singles are being advertised and sold through the more 'progressive' record shops, or changing hands through youth clubs or organisations.

More importantly, perhaps, is the move from recorded to 'live' music as of primary importance to bands. Alongside overcoming the initial problems associated with making a record, this move allows greater access to a larger section of the community. There has been an upsurge of new bands playing (largely without profit) in local pubs, clubs, discos, student unions and on protest rallies/

marches. Many of the musicians themselves are still at school or unemployed. The cost or hire of equipment is (relatively) cheap and the satisfaction and enjoyment immediate. A sense of belonging to a group of people who can, through the words of their songs, voice their own opinions, tell of their own experiences and advocate their own strategies without the limitations of the recording contract is very strong.

This increase in participation is probably one of the most significant developments for CND. It is a resource which should be used to its fullest advantage. Along with unemployment, boredom, lack of money and facilities and emotional problems, the threat of nuclear war and concern about the future feature strongly in the lyrics of this new generation of songwriters.

Little Boys - Little Girls

Little boys are given little soldiers to play with,
little toy soldiers, little wars, little corpses.
Little girls are given little people to play with,
little dollies to nurse, little wounds, little bandages,
little corpses.

The above quotation comes from an anarchist leaflet handed out to people on the march - highlighting the progression of the child into adulthood: channelled through very rigid gender specific categories of behaviour and belief.

Men are taught to destroy their fellow men, and women
are taught to patch up this tattered reality, taught to
patch up this destructive reality and produce more raw
material (children) for it ...

Even a brief encounter with children's magazines and comics immediately reveals a sharp demarcation between the sexes in both form and content. Excluding the 'humorous' comics, such as Beano and Dandy, which are more sexually ambivalent, a rough inventory of male/female roles and interests can be drawn.

Girls Comics

Younger age range: beginning to read to 8 years.

i) Names generally associated with those of a girl, eg. Twinkle,
Jack and Jill.

- ii) Recurrent themes:
- helping others (via shopping, housework)
 - acting as 'nurse' to injured toys or friends,
or in a 'pretend' hospital scene alongside
'Dr. David'

8 - 13 years

- i) Names continue to be those of a girl, eg. Bunty, Mandy, Debbie.
- ii) Recurrent themes:
 - strong emphasis on sporting events and ballet, though general lack of other physical activity
 - trying to 'right wrongs', and aid the less fortunate (fighting emotional battles)
 - rediscovering lost family or relatives
 - emphasis on the personality (worthiness) of the heroine
- iii) Location:
 - home, family, school (immediate social location)
 - past and present
 - less 'fantastic' settings in the future

Boys Comics

Age range more difficult to discern: approx. 8 - 14 years.

- i) Names generally taken from action or qualities, eg. Valiant, Eagle, Shoot, Hotspur.
- ii) Recurrent themes:
 - action and adventure, physical feats performed against all odds, battle, struggle
 - stress on skill and ingenuity
 - comradeship and competition
 - absence of family ties (free agents)
- iii) Location:
 - past, present or future (cowboys, dashing cavaliers, soldiers, football stars, spacemen)
 - Interestingly, these 'heroes' are noticeably much older than the intended audience, whereas the 'heroines' are more closely identifiable with the girls' own age group.

The female doll (baby) and 'best friend' are counterposed to the gun and the 'comrade-in-arms'. Little girls and little boys are as different as 'Cindy' and 'Action Man'.

This duality can be further demonstrated via teenage magazines, though more problematically, as although a plethora of female artifacts exist (centred almost wholly around romance), a male equivalent is difficult to identify (contenders being specialised sports and hobbies magazines, the music press, and

continued reading of adventure strip comics, especially science fiction magazines, eg. 2000 AD). Previous research on this topic¹⁰ provides useful information, for future discussion, on the creation of male and female stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, and their role in the socialisation process of the adolescent.

However, the point to be made here is the pointed absence of issues pertinent to CND and the whole 'arms debate', in favour of particular constructed 'realities'.

3. Class

There are few direct references to class/class relations in the national media's coverage of the October CND march. But their virtual absence from the coverage in explicit terms does not affect their importance to CND, both in terms of how CND sees its future and how the movement is conceptualised and constructed by the media. Areas of importance include CND and its relation to class, and the relation of the national press to class and the effects of this relation on the coverage of CND and the October march in particular.

CND and Class

Taylor and Pritchard cite a comment by Stuart Hall in their book The Protest Makers (1980: 118) that CND was "bizarrely unprepared" for the success of the TGWU unilateralist resolution at the Labour Party Conference in 1960. CND was seen as letting slip the opportunity of consolidating this major breakthrough because of its failure to forge links with the Labour Movement, with the result that the resolution was defeated at the conference the following year. This could serve as a note of warning. The decision of the 1981 Labour Party Conference on unilateralism can obviously be seen as a tactical victory for CND. But, in view of what happened 20 years ago, Bruce Kent's comment the week before the march seems rather worrying:

I don't think we have any tactics yet. We haven't had time. The revival caught us as much by surprise as anyone else.

(The Sunday Times, 25.10.81 p.3)

It would also seem unwise to depend too heavily on the 1981 conference 'commitment' on unilateralism. The Labour leader, Michael Foot, was himself careful with his words at the rally, with little policy commitment:

When we get a new Labour government ... we will translate these measures of nuclear disarmament into practical action. Only by disarmament can we properly protect our people.

(The Sunday Times, 25.10.81, p.1)

According to Taylor and Pritchard (1980: 116), the British Labour Movement has often shown a critical attitude to single-issue campaigns, such as those on capital punishment and abortion. In their view, the crucial point is a neglect of economic concerns seen in such campaigns:

Because the Movement in the UK was one of middle-class radicalism par excellence and was therefore largely unconcerned with basic economic issues of jobs, investment alternatives and so on, it failed to make the crucial breakthrough to the working class.

(Taylor and Pritchard, p.140)

Leaving aside their comments on 'middle-class radicalism' until later, it is worth examining their comments on the Labour Movement, the working-class and concern over economic issues.

It may be that the Labour Movement (Parliamentary Labour Party and trade unions) is wary of issues unconnected with economic questions (although even this seems an oversimplification). In the Morning Star at the time of the march there were frequent references to a need to link the fight over nuclear weapons to other, economic, issues.

Here, for example, is Gordon McLennan:

... Mrs Thatcher could be forced into an election next year, by a combination of the mighty movement for disarmament seen in Saturday's gigantic demo, by the B.L. workers' struggle ... and by the solidarity of workers in defence of each other's jobs and in supporting each other's wage claims.

(Morning Star, 26.10.81, p.3)

(It should be noted here that he did continue to include the struggle against racism and for women's rights.) Similarly, the miners' leader, Mick McGahey, stated:

It is trades unionists above all who must fight the obscenity of £12 billion spent on nuclear weapons and destruction, while four million who could produce useful and needed goods and services are deprived of the right to work.

(Morning Star, op. cit)

It is also significant that some trade unionists had refused to affiliate with CND because of what they saw as a lack of concern and strategy in the movement about job-related issues. Reports concerning the refusal of The Civil and Public Services Association to affiliate stated that:

Amongst the ...

So it does seem that it is not only a question of 'jobs not bombs', but of allaying the fears of many workers about possible job losses: 'What jobs without bombs?'

But it seems too neat to suggest that the working-class is interested in nothing unless it is linked to jobs. Jobs are not the only deep concern of people. They have other desires, not the least of which could reasonably be expected to be a desire to avoid incineration/death from radiation. To set up a mechanistic view of workers as only interested in jobs (and money) is to accept media stereotypes.

One further point connected with the quote above can be mentioned here. As will be shown in the next section, the media can be seen as intent on marginalising CND as 'radical middle-class' and full of 'trendies' for reasons of their own. This may have unfortunate repercussions on CND as far as working-class support is concerned. As Taylor and Pritchard state:

However much this may have been a caricature of the Movement, it was a psychological barrier between the working class and the Movement, and one which was, and is, continually reinforced by a hostile media (emphasis added).

(Taylor and Pritchard, p. 116)

The Media and Class

There are two aspects of the media's representations of CND by means of class connotations that we can mention here. The first concerns the effect on CND of a media construction of a 'National Interest', and the second relates to the marginalisation of CND, in the popular press in particular, by depicting it as 'trendy, middle-class radicalism'.

The former refers to the way CND as a protest movement is seen as a danger to the 'National Interest' by providing a site for 'extremists' bent on class warfare. According to The Daily Telegraph editorial:

The three main streams (of CND) are those generated and mobilised by political class warfare, by religious elements and by other activists using moral arguments. The class-warfare element is most influential behind the scenes and most widespread in day-to-day activities owing to the whole range of party political and trade union organisations at its disposal.

(26.10.81, p.16)

We should note here that a reader does not come across an event 'cold'. In this connection, a whole range of images concerning class warfare, trade unions and party political organisations was constructed before the issue in which the editorial quoted above appears. In the same way, the connection of CND to 'the international Communist movement' (Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.) and the 'Communists and the Trots' (The Sun), connects the movement to 'militants and extremists' previously defined in other issues of the papers as threatening the 'National Interest'.

The second aspect was the attempt to underplay the mass movement character of the event by marginalising it as middle-class - radical middle-class, with images of 'trendy' middle-class youth 'letting their hair down' in a march which was seen as almost having the air of a pop-festival. CND's own insistence that it wanted a joyful event could be seen as leaving itself open to this media construction. The media's depiction of the composition of the marchers also added to the marginalisation, emphasising that the marchers were somehow 'weak' middle-class, as with:

Many of those who surged to Hyde Park on Saturday were actual or potential SDP voters. Among such people, the same kind of well-meaning trendiness makes them want to ban the bomb and love Shirley Williams.

(Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.6)

This portrayal of CND as a primarily middle-class movement must be taken together with the other ways in which the popular press attempted to marginalise the demonstration - as youthful or naive, for example. The problems posed for CND itself are fundamental: they go further than changing the movement's image. They concern its class character and the difficulties of constructing a cross-class appeal.

4. CND - A Whiter than White Issue

Of all the themes discussed, race was the most submerged. It appears almost totally absent. Yet, once again, if we pinpoint the racial content of elements in the debate, we can see that it is structured in a particular way. A popular device was the use of lists of categories of people, organisations or constituencies, of an apparently mutually exclusive kind:

There were punks and grey-haired nuns, toddlers and children in prams, trade unionists and young women with painted faces. There were poets against the bomb, scientists against nuclear arms, teachers for peace, and women for life on earth.

(The Observer, 25.10.81, p. 1)

Where race appears in these lists, which is rarely, it is separated off from the rest of the official organisations:

It was a day for all ages, races and creeds, a day for trades unionists, Christians, Communists, and Labour Party supporters.

(Morning Star, 26.10.81, p.1)

Not only were the demonstrators seen primarily as white. The main speakers reported were Tony Benn, Michael Foot, E.P. Thompson and Fenner Brockway, with only passing references to the German officer and the Hiroshima victim. Any 'fringe' racial groups were reported, as in the Sunday Express, from

'Land Rights for Aborigines' became yet another amusing 'quirk' of the festive occasion. Any serious aspects of the statement become submerged by its amusement value - it becomes yet another 'tag', yet another 'cause' to put on a trendy alternative badge.

One does not have to go back very far to recall very different images of racial minorities in this country. In the reportage of the 1981 Riots, in Brixton, Toxteth and Moss Side, black (youth) was in definite opposition to white (police/authority/society). The harmony of a multi-racial society was broken by a disruptive black element. Because of this association between riotous demonstration and blackness in our society, no demonstration can avoid potential connections with race related issues. Indeed, as has been argued elsewhere, race is one of the main forms through which the contemporary crises in British society are experienced. In this case, CND's peaceful demonstration could, potentially, be mobilised against the collective actions of black people. If, on the other hand, CND resorts to direct action it must expect to be connected negatively to black struggles.

A similar set of connections can be established between terrorism, race and the nuclear issue. We have already noted the importance given to the story of Sir Stuart Pringle on the day of the CND demonstration. Two further points can be made here. First, terrorism is seen as an external or alien force intruding on the British domestic scene. Even the IRA is often portrayed in this way. Very often, however, the portrayal of terrorism involves a specifically racial dimension: the source of the threat is the Third World, especially Iran, Palestine or Libya. Secondly, it appears worse for one man (in this case) to be attacked by a terrorist bomb - more horrific, more inhumane - than the obliteration of millions, and the injuring of many thousands more, by a neutron bomb. Violence on the domestic front is more abhorred than the many wars which the Western countries have directly or indirectly engaged in, or those that they envisage in the future.

The debate is racially framed in other ways. It is overwhelmingly concerned with relations between the U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and Europe. We've already noted the fiction of 'no war' since 1945. We might also note the dread of 'proliferation', which almost always implies the insanity of third-world leaders or the instability of non-white regimes. These are seen as lacking a planned strategy of defence of their own, certainly one independent of super-power interests and calculation.

Against all this, we are struck by the positive potential of CND in relation to race. CND is an issue and a movement which unites - it is not a collection

of a few marginal political groupings, or young people with 'nothing better to do', but a great signifying force of the strength of belief being able to overcome racial prejudice. With many multi-racial groups, like 'The Beat' and 'The Specials', declaring their support for CND's policies in verbal statements or through the lyrics of their songs. there exists a concrete base on which to express the movement's cohesiveness -people uniting in a common cause, people uniting in racial harmony. The stressing of any such examples of this unity of peoples, whatever colour or religion, can only be beneficial.

Imagine there's no country,
It isn't hard to do.
Nothing to kill or die for,
And no religion too.
Imagine all the people,
Living life in peace ...

You may say I'm a dreamer,
But I'm not the only one.
I hope some day you will join us,
And the world will be as one ...

Imagine no possessions,
I wonder if you can.
No need for greed or hunger,
A brotherhood of man.
Imagine all the people,
Sharing all the world ...

You may say I'm a dreamer,
But I'm not the only one.
I hope some day you will join us,
And the world will live as one ...

(Imagine, John Lennon)

It is in the latter verse of the quote that another important issue comes to light - that of greed and hunger, the gaping divide between the West and the Third World. While enormous emphasis is placed on the amount of money being spent on increasing armaments by the U.S.A., Britain and the U.S.S.R., any forceful comparison with the limited resources devoted to aiding development of the Third World is pointedly lacking. As with the argument stated earlier, in relation to the growth of unemployment and the decline of the welfare services, a mere call for less expenditure in one particular area (arms) becomes an empty cry without reasoned qualification. Such tremendous financial resources, if successfully curtailed, must be directed to more beneficial uses - to be spent on improving the standard and quality of life, not only at home, but in aiding other countries of the world. The Morning Star remarked that it was the 93-year-old veteran peace campaigner, Fenner Brockway, who best set the tone of the afternoon:

This is something even bigger than the end of nuclear weapons ... We have heard of Socialism with a new face. This is a movement for a world with a new face, to establish human rights everywhere and end poverty for 800m people on the verge of starvation.

(26.10.81, p.1)

It is a pity more people did not hear him.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In our contacts with several local CND groups we have met the belief that the media coverage of the October Demonstration was gratifyingly successful. Often this took the form of an immediate pleasure. Many supporters of the movement were pleased, rather in the spirit of 'Did you see me on the telly?', at the sheer visibility of the movement. There are, perhaps, two dimensions of this pleasure: an exhilaration at apparent success, often a product of actual participation; and a belief that visibility in itself cannot be put success within our grasp, signalling, perhaps, a radical change in public opinion. Certainly this is one set of real effects, one possible reading. Any mass movement must depend, in ways noted in our introduction, upon visibility and publicity. This is an elementary condition for increasing support. In such circumstances, any coverage is better than none.

We have also argued, however, that there are limits to any purely 'quantitative' view of this kind. The 'quality' of the coverage also matters. The question is how we can assess these qualitative aspects.

Throughout this report, we have treated such qualitative questions less as a matter of bias and more as a construction of what we have called 'traps' and 'openings'. By 'traps' we mean ways of representing the movement which, in our opinion, work to counteract CND's own aims. These are 'traps' because they are easily fallen into, hard to escape from, and not always easy to detect. By 'openings' we mean possibilities which exist in the relevant fields of debate for overcoming such obstacles, seizing initiatives of argument, or circumventing or deconstructing the arguments of opponents. In what follows we summarise our findings in these terms.

Openings and traps exist on two main levels: in terms of the arguments and themes of the debate itself and in terms of the organisation of media production. We shall concentrate mainly on the first level - since our own competence as students of culture mainly lies there, but we end with some points about the second.

Traps and Openings: The Debate

The Defence/Deterrence Trap

This seems to us the most important of the conservative arguments and therefore CND's biggest pitfall. The paradigm statement is that 'Nato is the best peace movement'. Here the ground is shifted from 'peace' (with its dangerous combination of popular and utopian elements) to 'defence', as the only means to (a limited) peace. It is only by deterring the aggressor

that peace is secured for the nation, in concert with the international military allies of the West. Nor is this the end of paradoxes: if the military secures peace, peaceful demonstrations risk war. In practice this means constant military vigilance, escalating weaponry, and an escalating argument, too. CNDers are seen to threaten the military preparedness of the West. Objectively, if not by intention, they undermine the will to defend. As we shall see, this is easily extended to the next argument - which we call the 'Red Trap'. But what is it that we defend? Not merely peace, but the British (or American) way of life, especially its unique freedoms. The U.S.S.R., by contrast, represents the denial of all freedoms and the permanent threat of communist world domination. Those who are oblivious to all this must be either naive or subversive. Unilateralism is particularly vulnerable on this score.

Our analysis suggests that it is ineffective to respond by attempting to return the argument to the moral absolute of 'peace'. . . Better openings are offered by the contradictions in the conservative case or by the uncovering of the often hidden premises on which the whole deterrence argument ultimately rests. The contradictions are many. There is a central moral contradiction: the justification of brutal means (preparation for war) by desired ends (peace as the absence of war). The chief strategic contradiction is the disproportionate vulnerability of European populations in an alliance of Western states. The chief tactical contradiction lies in the current propensity of American leaders to blow the gaffe about the possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe. There is plenty of scope here for CND, especially in these questions: what kind of peace is 'guaranteed' by the preparation for war. Is such a state, indeed, really peaceful? Whose peace is secured? But we believe that the most promising openings lie in questioning the premise on which the whole defence/deterrence argument rests. It rests on a particular representation of the post-war international 'settlement' and of Britain's place in a network of alliances. In this representation the cold war becomes perma-frost. The existing map of alliances, the way the world is divided, strategically and ideologically, is frozen, hard, immovable, unchangeable, eternal. We enter a solid state, without history, which stopped at the point where Sir Winston Churchill identified the Soviet Union as the new enemy, and the United States as the dominant power within 'the English-speaking people'. Britain's loss of an imperial role further solidified this set of national identifications. An historically specific situation and set of partisan strategies comes to be represented, therefore, as a permanent 'fact of life', to which we must simply adjust.

Against this it seems to us that CND (and especially END) stands for a more properly historical appraisal of developments within and between states. This points to a radical redrawing of the map of international alliances and identifications in which the European dimensions are of great (but not exclusive) importance. We cannot enter this extensive debate here, except to note that this line of argument radically undercuts all the most confident conservative presumptions.

The Red Trap

Given the existence of an allegedly implacable external foe deterred only by a nuclear arsenal, CND can easily be identified as any enemy sympathiser. The rigid and bureaucratic statism of the Soviet Union is easily transformed into images of an incursive international communism. This 'communism' (despite its evident creakiness) is then connotatively connected to all forms of terrorism or subversion whose particular genealogies are neglected. All riots and demonstrations are organised by communists. The whole spectrum of oppositional activities, from peace camps to IRA bombs, are orchestrated, of course, by dedicated left-wing activists. CND is just one of those many well-meaning but naive organisations used by the Reds. Furthermore, in its demonstrations CND is equated with all those who engage in 'unlawful' activities on the streets - rioters, muggers, pickets. It is made to represent, in this way too, a threat to law and order, parliamentary democracy and an unstable, internal 'peace'. Respectable citizens stay quietly in their private houses (locking their children in there, too), exercising their democratic rights at five-yearly intervals through the ballot box. They, too, must 'sit it out, my dear'. Only communists, extremists or 'politically-motivated' persons attend meetings in public places, leaflet, demonstrate, or use their rights of public speech or assembly. If the U.S.S.R. is the enemy without, then the Reds are the enemy within.

There are, in our view, two main ways out of this trap. The first is to take the offensive in the practical battle over liberties. It is important to concentrate on the substantive infringements of liberties entailed by an increasingly militarised state, drawing on both working-class traditions of

solidarity and the liberal demand for individual rights. Even the present government is sensitive to contradictions which may arise when non-violent peace-marchers face the forces of police, army and the nuclear state. The new version of the Home Guard, experimentally deployed close to named sites for the Cruise missiles, is the most obvious response to fears of such a coming confrontation. But involved here is the whole paraphernalia of surveillance, policing and authoritarianism which, as much recent commentary has stressed, has become characteristic of British state forms in the 1970s and 1980s. CND is centrally involved, in the necessary exercise of its own democratic rights, in the more general struggle.

There is a further dimension to the issue similar, in form, to our argument about deterrence. Just as international alliances are held to have ossified in the post-war period, so there has been a freezing-over of the internal political system, too. British parliamentary democracy is a completed and perfect system no longer capable, it seems, of further historical development. Yet as a movement of the people against the centres of power, CND more than any other organisation, represents the desire of a deepening or extension of democratic practices at a time of considerable disillusionment with politicians and with formal political routines. We consider this one of our most important arguments, for the terms of conservative rhetoric are actually here reversed and in ways which, in our view, have immense political potential. Once again CND is necessarily involved in considering the implications of its own acts and arguments.

The Class Trap

The traps of class, gender, youth and race operate differently from those examined so far. They depend less on explicit arguments, more upon implicit associations, identifications and oppositions. They also work differently depending which social group is the subject of a news story and which is constituted as its audience.

The class trap depends upon establishing the middle-class character of CND as a movement, therefore, for working-class people, its minority or 'fringe' status. This is the characteristic move of the popular Conservative press. In itself this distances CND from a potential working-class membership, essential for its success as a mass movement. But the trap works best when the 'class-ness' of CND is connected to other popular representations of its character - its lack of realism or practical common-sense, its somewhat leisurely celebration of dissent, its heterogeneity (those random lists of persons and organisations), its general airy-fairness. In all these interlocking ways, working-class

viewers and readers are invited to see CND as 'them' and not 'us'.

It must be admitted that CND often falls for this one. Its appeal is characteristically 'humanist' in the sense that the struggle for survival for the whole human race obscures the force of social divisions and relations. There is a problem about CND's largely middle-class character and its tendency to subordinate everyday considerations to large moral imperatives and grandiose aims. One particular feature here is the tendency to neglect the real economic stake of many working-class (and middle-class) people in the design and production of weaponry, the problem of breaking into the circuit of the arms race and of economic dependence on the armaments industries.

Yet there are real openings here too. It is important to raise, in concert with CND's main arguments, the issue of the social use value of economic production and the possible shape and forms of production for peace. There are connections to be made with parallel debates about socially-useful products - those initiated by, for example, the Lucas Aerospace shop-stewards combine. It is hard to imagine a more ultimately wasteful form of production than the capitalist production of military armaments. Similarly, since large amounts of public money are involved, CND can make its own interventions in the debates about public expenditure and the social wage.

It is in CND's own interests to be fully conscious of its relations to a politics of class. One of the most sincerely hoped-for outcomes of Conservative politics is the deepening of oppositions between a radical but marginalised middle-class movement and a conservative working-class. Preventing this is not a matter of some purely external relation to 'the Labour Movement'. CND needs to speak directly to working-class people, too. It also needs to listen very hard - to its own working-class membership.

The Gender Trap

Here again a close, if connotative, connection is made between CND and a particular social group - in this case women. CND is connotatively feminine. This identification, however, works very differently for men and for women and for those within and outside the movement.

For women inside the movement, CND's femininity is a particular source of strength, especially when allied to a feminism. The movement too draws great internal strength from this association. For many women CND provides a form of politics in which the issues of personal life can be given a public force and platform. For men, especially for men influenced by feminism, CND may

provide a more open context where a new political relationship with women may be developed, outside the very masculinist styles of orthodox political parties, including those of the Left.

For men outside the movement and for women untouched by a feminist self-assertion the connotatively feminine character of CND may further marginalise the movement as 'serious politics'. As we have argued in detail, this gender structuring of the debate is pervasive, especially in the language of deterrence.

Insofar as CND uses this feature, which often remains profoundly unconscious, especially for men, it is necessarily involved in an over-arching politics of gender. It must in fact be in the business of helping to break some of the most powerful stereotypes in our society, especially the persistent and oppressive division of public issues from personal experiences.

The Youth Trap

As we have seen, the theme of CND youthfulness may also serve to marginalise the movement. The more innocuous connotations are, at the present, the more usual: a festive frivolity, naivety, innocence led by ageing demagogery. CND itself has sometimes laid this trap for itself, in, for example, its press handouts. Like all the associations with which we have dealt, however, youthfulness is double-sided. There exists another set of associations that present youth especially male and more especially black and sub-cultural male youth, as deviant or riotous. These two sets of connotations represent, respectively, youth in its active and passive moments.

It is as if the only activity of the young that is newsworthy is that representable in terms of threat. Part of the same post-war settlement that brought in the cold war saw the emergence of youth as a particularly novel and rich field of consumerist development - as a market in itself and as a training-ground for adult consumerism. It has remained a highly contradictory field ever since, the more so with the remarkable back-firing of the commercial exploitation of popular music and the dramatic economic and institutional redefinition of the youthful transition in the 1970s.

This poses particular dilemmas for CND, which is necessarily entangled in the politics of the generations. If CND can draw on the rejection of the patterned model of 'good citizenship', it also faces the sanctions of moral panics against the youthful sub-cultures. This includes, both as a potential trap and as a real opening, the challenge to the dominant modes of masculinity which is now a marked feature of sub-cultural performance and style. Nonetheless,

it is precisely this network of issues and meanings that provides CND with some of its most resonant possibilities. At stake is the right of young people, as bearers of the future, to self-organised activity, very different from the forms of coercion and semi-conscription envisaged by the Conservative theorists of the youth problem. Nowhere is the need of CND to present itself as a movement of alliances, each with their semi-independent initiatives and a real autonomy, more evident. But this is not of course to advocate a kind of ageism; for all our people, young and old, have an interest in a war-free future.

The Race Trap

We have argued that race, of all our themes, is the most subterranean and therefore, ultimately, the most inhibiting. Since there is, as yet, no clear identification of CND with black dissent, except perhaps through music, even the conservative rhetoricians, quick to play the racist card elsewhere, have not yet played it here. But race is an issue for CND nonetheless. The anti-nuclear movement, universalist in its claims and best traditions, still works within limitations that are, at best, Eurocentric, and therefore unconsciously racist, racist often by omission. It parallels the blindspots of 'third world' internationalism, in which non-European populations are presented, one-dimensionally, only in terms of passivity and the direct physical need.

Part of that redrawing of the map of international sympathies we spoke of earlier involves serious address to peoples for whom inter-state politics are not centrally matters of a big-power polarisation, yet whose domestic politics suffer continually from big-power manipulations. This 'external' issue is intimately related to 'internal' politics, for the black peoples of Britain are increasingly conscious of their different, connected and often antagonistic history. CND is one of the few progressive movements with a legacy of anti-imperialism and a concern for the dialectics of domestic and international processes. To have a particular opportunity and responsibility here.

Some Objections

But should CND, it may be argued, really take on so many issues and of such diverse kinds? Will they not divert the movement from its central aims and immediate objectives? If our whole argument is correct, there is one clear answer to this understandable objection. CND is already embroiled in these issues whether it likes it or not. Its success or failure, in the most obvious immediate respects, depends on how it handles these mobilising or de-mobilising themes. This point may be further reinforced with one further illustration,

which also has the advantage of stressing how the men work in combination, or are articulated. Our example is Paul Johnson's '150,000 Reasons Not to Panic' (Daily Mail, 26.10.81, p.6), a classic, in its way, of anti-CND propaganda. We may listen here to the range of associations CND's enemies may marshal.

This article was, of course, about the best way to secure 'peace'. It carefully juxtaposed 'peace crowds' (which are peculiarly volatile) with 'the rest of us' who have learned 'to keep our heads - and our powder dry', and, 'in a lawless and dangerous world... to carry a big stick'. Here we have the familiar struggle over the term 'peace' itself (and over the cognate terms 'pacifist', 'unilateral' etc.). In this struggle Johnson marshalls every possible historical resource from 'appeasement' and the Oxford Union debate of 1933 to early CND. His piece is less obviously about Britain's place in the world. It assumes, rather, the rectitude of Mrs. Thatcher's 'maximum possible encouragement to President Reagan'. 'Pacifism' is not an alternative strategy of defence (or of anything else). It is, rather, 'an emotional spasm'. Much more obviously present is our third theme - CND and a general politics - but here of course in the Conservative mode. The key opposition is that between 'the crowd' or 'mob' manipulated by 'Large numbers of dedicated organisers' and the 'responsible voter'. CND and its predecessors are accused of failing ever to elect a single MP. The volatility of ~~crowds~~ is compared (with hushed reverence) to 'the calm and privacy of the General Election booth'. Johnson's avowed political worry is characteristically parliamentary: will the vote-catching SDP be tempted to flirt with unilateralism:

Its Liberal allies have already largely surrendered to the bomb-banners.

Many of those who surged to Hyde Park on Saturday were actual or potential SDP voters. Among such people the same kind of well-meaning trendiness makes them want to ban the bomb and love Shirley Williams - though these two emotions are, in theory, mutually exclusive.

(Daily Mail, op. cit.)

This last passage is an excellent example, too, of the ways in which the subterranean themes may structure a contribution like this one. It is useful to ask who exactly are the well-meaning persons? They are certainly young, as the rest of the article makes clear - though there are also the 'old orators' survivors from an earlier phase, and, of course, those sinister 'organisers'. Are they not also members of the middle-class, or the sons and daughters of professionals, a little pampered perhaps, very different from your average, lower-middle class, striving Daily Mail reader? And are they not a bit like Shirley Williams too, a bit whacky, a bit too 'nice' for their own good, a shade 'feminine'? The gender based themes are hardly as explicit here as they are elsewhere ('We must steel our nerves to face him down' - ~~Lord G...~~

Brown), but are they not a rather feminine lot? Together, Johnson's own combination of themes - his ideological problematic - produces a particular set of oppositions or dichotomies, things 'we' see as 'us', against things definitely alien to our world:

'them'	'us'
crowds	voters
mobs	responsible politicians
manipulation	'keep our heads'
youthful	mature
emotion	reason
collectivities	individuals
(Femininity)?	(Masculinity)?

This is a particular version of anti-CND Conservatism, owing much to the Mail's solidly Thatcherite politics and Johnson's own brand of socialist and pacifist baiting. But we hope our more general conclusion is clear. If CND's enemies already employ these themes as 'traps', must not CND's supporters address a similar range of themes (and others) as openings?

Structural Aspects: Limits and Recommendations

This report has stretched, in all honesty, well beyond our own expectations. We hope it already implies tactics and strategies from within its very analyses (as well as many imponderables that are not going to go away). There are, however, definite limits to political calculations of this kind.

The most important of these lie in the existing organisation and control of the most powerful of the public media¹¹. Although we have stressed the diversity of media and the importance of neglected areas like the music industry, even these media are hardly popular in the sense of popular control.

Music, moreover, is a somewhat special case. There is little chance that The Lunatics Have Taken over the Asylum will appear as a headline in The Sun over a story about Reagan's address to the British nation. And media like The Sun are a much more typical product of the tightly controlled and owned corporations that dominate the media industries. They rarely allow the more liberal access to the

means of communicative reproduction and distribution that can characterise the contract between a recording company and musical group. CND must operate, then, institutionally as ideologically, in conditions that are not of its own making and which constrain it structurally.

The difficulties of establishing large scale and viable alternatives are equally daunting. Sanity and Peace News are one thing; a major left or radical liberal newspaper another. The costs of capitalisation are massive. Associated Newspapers Ltd has ready-made investment in plant and distribution networks, but the launching of a Sunday edition of the Mail will still cost in the region of thirty million pounds! Such limits must first be soberly noted, and the moral of the capitalist organisation of the media be drawn. In one important sense, it is unlikely that movements like CND will ever receive a 'favourable press' until these conditions are changed. The devil may not have the best tunes (though sometimes he has), but he certainly possesses the most powerful amplification systems.

Even so, we end with a list of quite prosaic recommendations which we believe may be of immediate use. We know this is far from exhaustive and that CND is already cognisant of some points. It is certainly not intended as a condensation of our report, but rather as a mapping out of some practical areas which became evident during our research. They are supplementary to our thoughts about a CND culture. This part of our report is properly subtitled: What CND can do around a media event

1. Extensive advance publicity

- to the national press, TV and especially radio, with pre-structured information, attentive to the range of themes, anticipating traps where possible,
- by providing speakers, or better, major press conferences. Use big names and supportive celebrities, but brief them,
- to the specialist press, especially women's and music press. In the case of the latter a better, wider policy of advertisement, including eg. the Melody Maker,
- through trade unions, churches and affiliated organisations.

2. Structure handouts to suit audiences

- the populars respond to personalised stories - can these be made genuinely progressive and informative?
- for the music press, stress the bands,
- denser information for the qualities. Visual items?

3. After the Event

- organise newsworthy media events - press conferences, benefits, newsworthy spokespersons to anticipate media recuperations. (Was the crucial period missed in October?)

4. Provide Guidelines to local branches

- our research suggests that local media can be more responsive especially to a local story. This seems especially true of local radio and even some local papers,
- parts 1 and 3 above apply to localities too but more specifically local strategies could be:
- more contact with existing alternative newspapers, fanzines etc.
- more contact with schools, youth organisations, perhaps using music,
- production of local advertising and publications,
- Contacts with sympathetic local journalists (especially local radio).

5. Media 'input' campaigns

- letter writing,
- phone in on phone-ins,
- submit articles to receptive publications, especially local and specialist,
- encourage people who are already well-known to advertise their support (eg. Paul Weller's article in Melody Maker after October).

6. Recognise the need for institutional change in the media

- organize in support of Media Watch's initiative,
- liaise with the Campaign for Press Freedom and Right of Reply, (The latter could be particularly helpful to CND in the future if the growing print union backing for the campaign results in industrial support for those disadvantaged by irresponsible use of the 'freedom of the press'.)
- comparable moves against similar deficiencies of the electronic media, including appeals to the rhetoric of the BBC and IBA charters,
- anticipate and devise means of using new developments like cable TV, Channel 4, SFX cassette magazine (for listening to, not reading).

7. Influence Media Workers and learn from their 'internal' knowledge
 - encourage local and personal contacts,
 - Supply a steady flow of info. which may never be published, but, reaching journalists, may influence their perspectives and even appear in underground compilations of censored material.
8. Promote CND's own publications and radical initiatives like the recent 'No Nukes' compilation LP.
9. If this report is useful (and even if it isn't), continue to work with critical media watchers, both teachers (colleges and schools) and researchers.

Esther Adams
Mariette Clare,
Graham Dulwich
Rick Gagola
Richard Johnson
Paul Jones

Birmingham,
April 6, 1982.

Afterword: A view from September 1982

As we noted in the introduction, it was not possible to complete a full, systematic follow-up to the October 1981 study. But several members of our group continued to 'media watch' through much of 1982, in connection with issues to do with war and peace. This was sometimes for general political reasons - especially activity within the peace movements themselves - but also because some of us were transfixed and horrified by the presentation of warfare in the course of the Falklands episode. Several of us kept notes on the new developments under the impetus of the initial study. We supplemented these observations with a more systematic look at the coverage in the national press of the events around Reagan's visit to Europe, the United Nation's session on Disarmament, and the CND National demonstration of Sunday 6 June 1982. We were unable, however, to review the coverage, this time round, in the electronic media.

In looking at the material available, we have had two sets of questions in mind. What, in retrospect, was the significance of the October 1981 demonstration and the media responses to it? Did it constitute, for example 'a kind of watershed' in media response to Peace Movements, as Ian Connell has suggested?¹² Did it mark a breakthrough in CND visibility, following its increasing popularity.

The second set of questions concerns the thematics of media coverage. Have these remained fairly constant, or has the terrain on which CND intervenes shifted in any fundamental way? How valid, in other words, does our original 'map' remain today? In what follows we explore these questions as part of an overall argument about the nature of coverage since October 1981.

So far as the mainstream media are concerned, that is the television networks and the national daily press, we find it hard to discern any lasting CND breakthrough. The evidence of press coverage from the 5th to the 8th June certainly does not support the break-through thesis. The overall pattern of coverage was very similar to that of October 1981; if anything it was more adverse. Once more the demonstration was buried by the popular press in the days immediately preceding it. There was no pre-publicity, favourable or otherwise, in The Sun, The Daily Mirror, The Daily Express, The Daily Mail on Saturday, nor in The Sunday Mirror, The People, or The News of the World on Sunday, the day of the rally itself. Again, only The Guardian and The Morning Star gave friendly previews, with the familiar wobbles in The Guardian

(see the rather jokey coverage of London's Nuclear Free Zone as a "bit of a disaster" The Guardian, 5th June, p.4). Once more The Telegraph attempted anticipatory action with a carefully chosen contro-page cluster of items. The first of these, a report of an unofficial anti-nuclear group in the Soviet Union, was in itself an ambiguous item. It could be read as evidence of Soviet popular responses to an E.N.D.-like strategy, linking dissenters in East and West. But it also contained an exposé of the compromised character of the official Soviet peace movement and of harassment of the true 'pacifists' by the Soviet authorities. This ambiguity was resolved, however, for all but the most bone-headed or dissident of Telegraph readers, by immediate juxtaposition to another story, headed - 'Communists Line up with CND Rally'. Since the British Communist Party material used for this item apparently praised Brezhnev's efforts for peace, The Telegraph sprang 'The Red Trap' in something like its classic anti-communist form. This elegant little constellation was completed by an item on the failure to remove the ban on music at the coming rally. The Undersecretary of the Department of the Environment was quoted as saying 'the music would add further to the disruption of the management of the park' (underlining supplied), another classic deployment of the theme of demonstrations as a nuisance.

The tendency to depend on variants of the October repertoire was a feature of Sunday's and Monday's coverage too. The Sunday Express called on Winston Churchill to attack, in a bellicose headline, 'This Sick Crusade that is Master-minded by Moscow'. This was followed in Monday's Express by the implicit identification of Scargill, Livingstone and Benn as the red menaces of the day. The Telegraph's report centred on Livingstone and stressed the security preparations for Reagan's visit (p.2 & back page). The Mail, in a surprisingly gentle variant of 'the Red Trap', mainly depended on poking visual fun at the demonstration and its vulnerability to thunderstorms, though again gave prominence to the three folk villains of popular Conservatism (Mail, Centre spread - "How Peace drove one man up the pole"). It was, The Sun, however, that practised the gentler arts of marginalisation, focussing on youthfulness and femininity. Its tiny page 2 column was headed by a picture of Judith Hart and the words "Punks back Peace Protest". It is worth adding that although we studied neither the BBC TV or ITN coverage in full, there was very general disappointment on this score within the peace movements, markedly in contrast with the sometimes euphoric appreciations of October.

Recognition of the whole range of media activity, however, once more confirms our earlier argument about media unevenness. If there has been no massive shift in the dominant media of public communication, it is our impression that a profoundly subversive permeation has nonetheless occurred since October 1981. There are several important indices here. Perhaps the most impressive is that highlighted by Martin Walker in a Guardian study on the trend to anti-nuclear publishing. Within the last year, "the nuke-book industry" has proved the most buoyant area of capitalist publishing, with several best-sellers (e.g. Protest and Survive; The Fate of the Earth) and a formidable list of new and popular books. As Helen Fraser of Fontana puts it, 'It's the most dramatic thing I've seen in publishing', The Guardian 5 June 1982, p.15.) But there are other indices too. As we suggested in our initial report, peace movement ideas often gain most ground on the margins of mainstream media, in more 'sub-cultural' or specialist contexts, amongst which we include those media mainly directed at the more radical sections of the professional middle-class. We have in mind not only the palpable radicalisation of The Guardian, but also the seriousness with which papers like The Sunday Times (and even The Times itself) now takes anti-nuclear politics. The Sunday Times, in particular has become notably open on these issues. On 6 June for example, it excerpted the main arguments of Peter Schnell's The Fate of The Earth, linking its publication to the CND rally. On the same day it argued editorially for the slowing down of the arm's race, acknowledging the force of the peace movements, and calling on Reagan to make some significant conciliatory gesture.

These underlying movements even appear, fragmentarily, in the pages of the Conservative populars, although in significantly 'marginal' contexts. We were surprised to find, for example, vigorous defences of CND and its right to propagandise in schools in the pages of The Daily Mail which are given over to 'junior Letters' (The Daily Mail, Saturday 5 June p.23), and an article in the TV Mail that coincided with our own view of the BBC and ITN news the previous October:

If you watched the BBC news on Sunday night you would be forgiven for concluding that the massive anti-nuclear demo in London earlier that day had been attended by more than its share of clowns and eccentrics.....

A different, less excitable view of the big march was provided by ITN..... (The Daily Mail, 8 June 82, p.21)

A view of the coverage of the 6 June demonstration, then, does not suggest any general break-through for the peace movement; it, does, however, suggest further palpable gains especially where particular audiences are addressed for particular reasons. We suspect, but cannot for the moment demonstrate, that this pattern could be traced in other media, comparing for example, a relatively favourable pattern of response in television current affairs programmes, and compared with the exclusions/suppressions of 'the news'. The salience of television series, fictional or 'factional', dealing with the effects of nuclear disaster, and the parallel development of a catastrophic, dis-topian literary fiction are cases in point. All these gains, of course, remain problematic, especially the failure to reach, in popular forms, a really large and especially working-class readership. But this advance, initially along 'the margins', is precisely what one would expect in so controlled and oligopolistic a media system as that which holds away in Britain today. In some ways, it is clear, main-stream media have ceased to express the full range of conflicting strands in public opinion - if indeed they ever did so. Much of the discussion around Channel 4 is a muffled, de-politicized and weakly pluralistic recognition of this fact.

Media coverage of CND events has, however, been uneven in another sense. It has depended very much on the precise conjuncture, on the surrounding context of other events. This is made quite dramatically clear by a comparison between October 1981 and June 1982.

The October demonstration was not accompanied by events that marginalised the initiatives of the European peace movements. On the contrary, the tactical errors of the Reagan administration made the underlying contradictions of the old Cold War strategies all too evident. Even in June a seamless presentation of Western unity was not without its conspicuous stitches and joints. The conservative press had to work very hard to ride the contradictions of President Reagan's (or Alexander Haig's) coolness towards the Falkland's expedition, especially at the United Nations. American reservations became clear on the very eve of Reagan's arrival in Britain. On Sunday all national newspapers carried front-page attacks on American perfidy under headlines like 'Two-Timed' (Sunday Mirror), 'Haig boobs' (People), 'Maggie Angry over U.S. Snub' (News of the World), 'British Fury Over U.S. Foul-up' (Sunday Express), 'Mrs. Thatcher's Angry Silence'. (Sunday Times). By Monday, in most newspapers, trans-atlantic harmony had been re-

created - 'Maggie - It's all splendid' (Daily Mail). But the rifts were significant nonetheless, not least in revealing, despite the bluster, the dependence of British foreign policy on American approval.

Conjuncturally, however, June was radically different from October. The second demonstration occurred at the height of the Falklands campaign, with British troops 'poised' to take Port Stanley. It interrupted several months of nationalist mobilisation and, latterly, national congratulation, quite unparalleled in post-war history. If, many conservative journalists implied, 1982 was a replay of British heroism in the 1940s, it was all the easier to cast the peace movement as appeasers. Actually it was surprising how seldom this connection - between the heady excitements of the Falklands and the nuclear debate - was made, by either side. But the huge salience of the Falklands adventure guaranteed the relative marginality of the peace demonstrations in columns and newscasts, tended to patch up the shaky American alliance, and mightily fuelled all those bellicose sentiments which also feed, as we have argued, the popularity of the deterrence strategy. 'The Falklands' did not so much strike directly at the peace movements, as shift the underlying ideological relations of force massively in their disfavour. Nowhere was this more evident than in the way that the expectation of war, some of its realities, and its immediate celebratory aftermath strengthened sexual divisions and inequalities in all their most atavistic forms. While 'our boys' went out to fight and die, 'their' women stayed at home to suffer, passively, the consequences of anxiety and perhaps bereavement. Our most abiding images from those days remain the juxtaposed pictures of weeping women at the quayside partings, and grinning, excited men waving goodbye from the ships. The Sunday Express produced its own sick version: 'Brighton belles' enjoying the heat wave, juxtaposed to 'true British grit' - an image of a marine, machine-gun strapped to ship-side rail, awaiting the next raid, but seated incongruously in a deck-chair (The Sunday Express, 6th June). Compared with this formidable pre-structuring of the whole field of relevant perceptions, the occasional concessions in the mainstream media - cartoons of Reagan as a button-pushing cowboy for instance - were of little moment. (See, for example, The People, 6 June, p.6). Dissenting voices, whether of eminent Anglicans or left-wing politicians, were forced to work on very unfavourable ground indeed. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if the CND demonstration (and the Reagan visit) had occurred in the more meditative and grieving aftermath of the Falklands adventure. Would

the more 'organic', long-term gains of the movement have shown up more clearly? Certainly if there have been long-term (if undramatic) gains for CND (and we are persuaded that there have been) these were powerfully cross cut in June by the full force of Falklands nationalism and militarism, a subject, of course, which requires its very own study, sensitive to the popularity of that moment.

In general, however, subsequent events seem to have confirmed rather than undermined the main conclusions of our earlier study. They suggest one self-criticism - the need radically to historicise all readings. This, indeed, is our main methodological conclusion. Media analysts need to pay more attention to the precise conjunctural context of all media texts, to close the gap between formal analysis and a history of representations.

NOTES

1. Alison Whyte to Richard Johnson, 6.10.81.
2. The membership of the whole group was as follows: Esther Adams, Nick Cavell, Mariette Clare, Graham Dawson, Graham Dulwich, Andrew Goodwin, Steve Groarke, Rick Gagola, Paul Jones, Richard Johnson, Elizabeth Merry Adam Mills, Dave Morley, Mike O'Shaughnessy.
3. The writing group consisted of Esther Adams, Mariette Clare, Graham Dulwich, Rick Gagola, Richard Johnson, Paul Jones.
4. The Leicester Mercury entirely ignored the whole event.
5. Although we were unable to collect a useful sample of such magazines, it would seem to be a fruitful area for future research.
6. These range all the way from content analysis, characteristic of positivist methods of media research, to cultural studies approaches, which are more qualitative and attentive to language and symbolic forms.
7. See the studies by Morley and Brunson, 1978, and Morley, 1980.
8. Warwick University Library.
9. See, for example, Cohen, 1971 and 1973, Cohen and Young, 1973, Hall et al., 1976 and 1978.
10. For example, McRobbie, n.d. But there is a great need for equivalent studies of boys and young men.
11. There is now a considerable body of published research on the structure of control of the media. For a useful introduction to many of the main themes see Curran and Seaton, 1981.
12. Ian Connell, 'Peace in Our Times?' in Crispin Aubrey (ed), Nukespeak: The Media and the Bomb (Comedia/Minority Press Group 9, 1982).

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